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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1986

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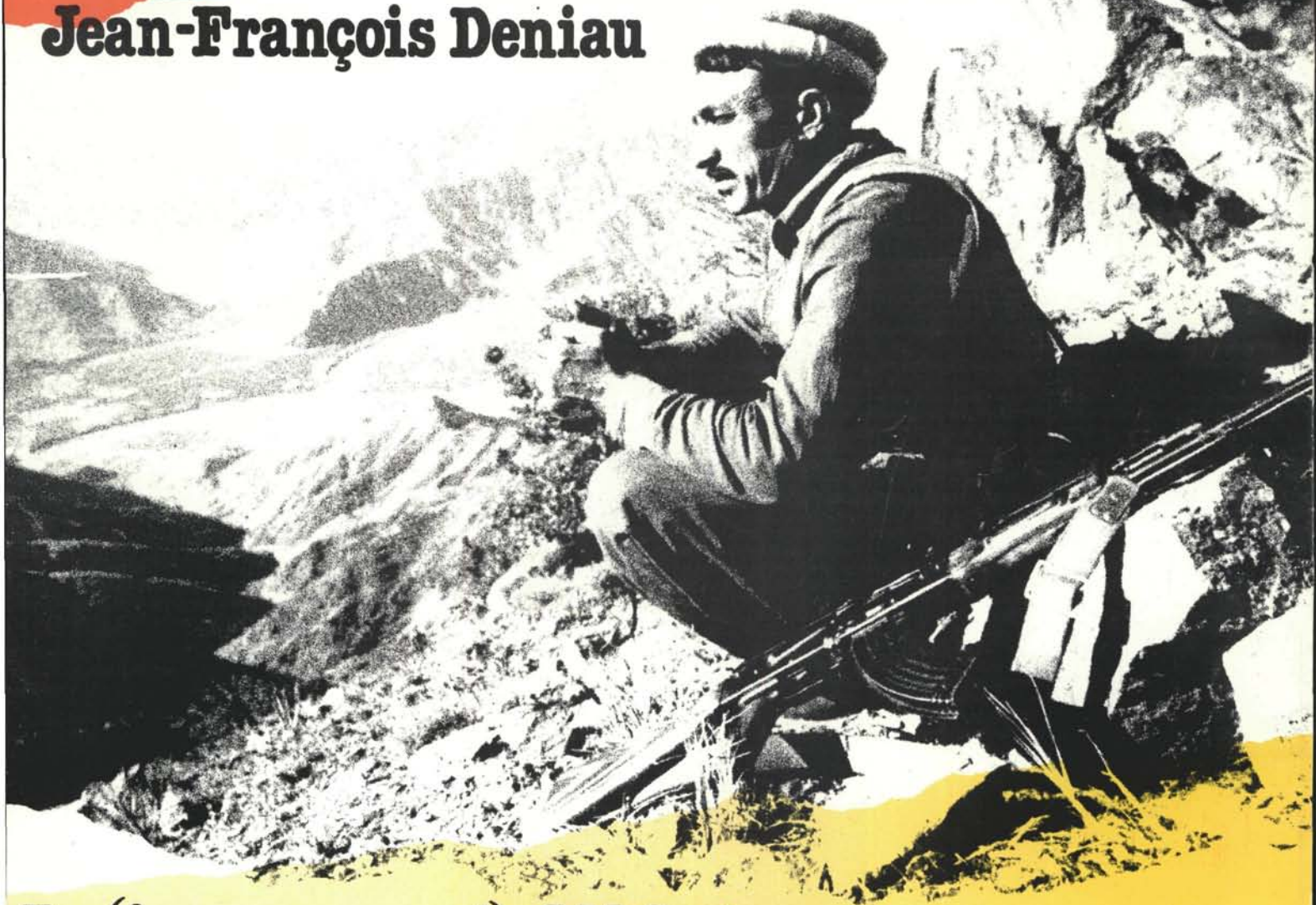
WITH THE REBELS IN AFGHANISTAN

Jean-François Deniau



Foe (from a new novel) **J.M.Coetzee**

Love, Desire, & Roger Scruton **John Weightman**

Paul Henze Ethiopia (III) **Edward Teller** "Star Wars"

Woodrow Wyatt/Edward Pearce South Africa

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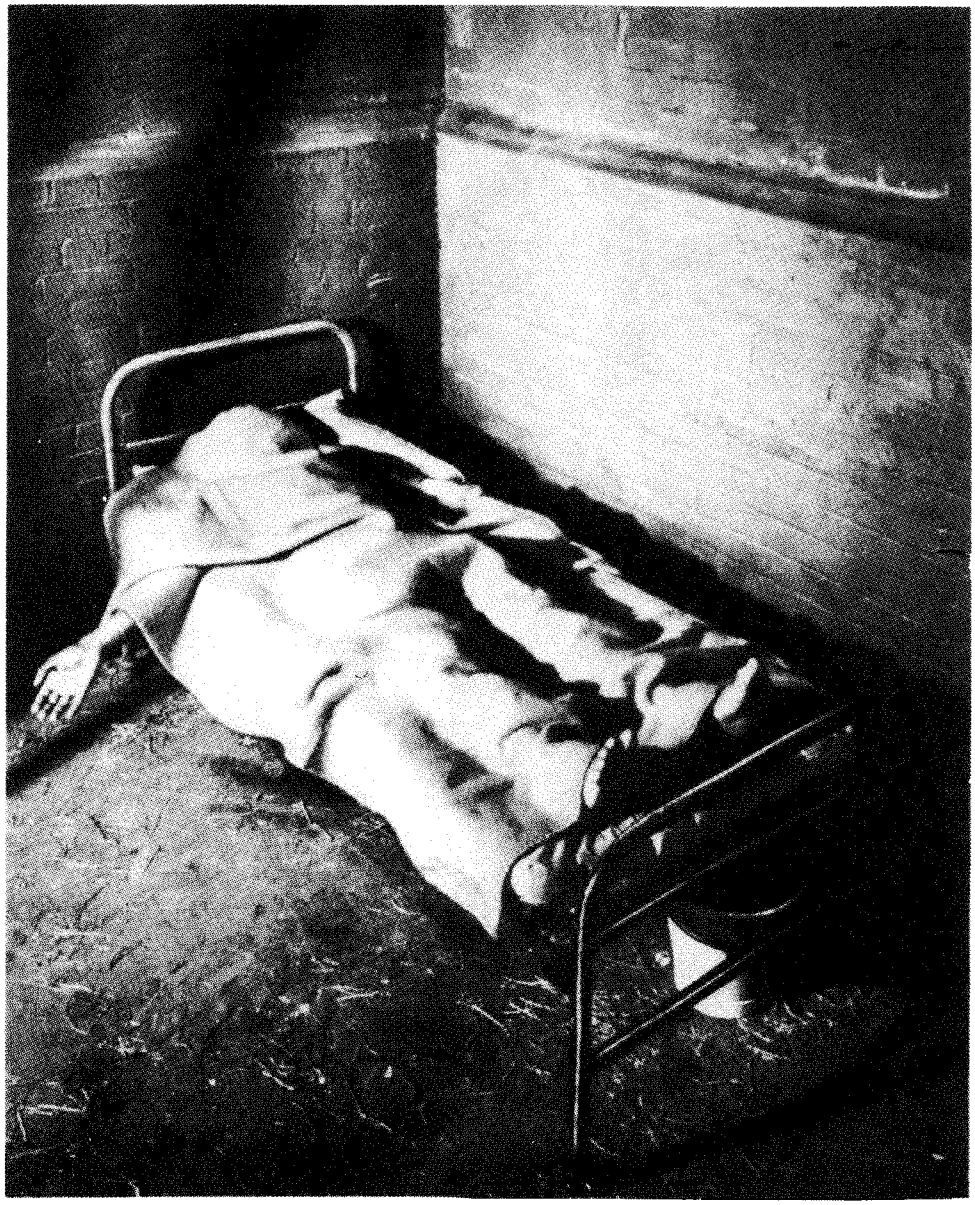

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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1986 VOL. LXVII No. 3 ISSN 0013-7073

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© *1986 by Encounter Ltd.* *Ten issues a year (July-August and September-October are single issues). Per copy: UK £1.50: USA $3.50. Back numbers £2.25 ($5.00). Postage/packaging: 50p ($1.00). Annual subscriptions: UK £18.00: USA & Canada $39.00 air-freight: India £20.00 by air. Elsewhere £19.00. Address for all departments: Encounter Ltd., 44 Great Windmill Street, London W1V 7PA (01-434 3063): UK Trade Distributors: Cutlerglen, 13 Newington Industrial Estate, Crampton Street, London SE17 3AZ (01-708 1308). Second-class postage paid at Rahway, NJ. US Postmaster: send address corrections to Encounter, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd Inc., 10B Engelhard Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001. Manuscripts are returned only if accompanied by s.a.e. (English stamp) or International Reply Coupons.*

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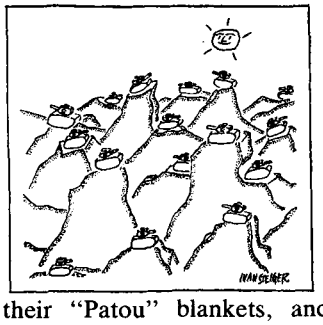
Jean-François Deniau

Two Hours after Midnight

With the Mujaheddin in Afghanistan



IN THE MIDDLE of the room, in a hollow in the earth floor, there was an open fire to warm the tea. A man kept it going with pieces of bark. The Mujaheddin were crowded round it, sitting, squatting, or lying down. They all looked alike in their beards, their Nuristan berets, their "Patou" blankets, and the puttees they wore as protection against anti-personnel mines. They had the same way of laughing, eating, scratching themselves, greeting each other, telling stories, or praying. Only their eyes seemed to differ, ranging from brilliant black to light blue. In the shadows, only their eyes and their teeth could be seen.

Against the stone and mud walls, behind the blurred figures in their blankets, there were the sharp silhouettes of their weapons: Kalashnikovs, *RPG-7* rocket-launchers, Dashaka machine-guns—Soviet models, seized from the enemy, abandoned by deserters, collected from the dead, supplied by China, bought in Pakistan, or copied in workshops in the frontier zone. Among them, longer and thinner, were the old British Lee-Enfield rifles so much prized in Afghanistan. These are accurate at 800 metres, and the Mujaheddin make it a point of honour not to miss. Despite the *MiG*s, tanks, and armoured helicopters of the world's most powerful army, they like to fight as their fathers did: man against man, rifle against rifle, and may the best marksman win.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS DENIAU *has written a book about his clandestine visits to guerrilla groups in Afghanistan, Angola, Eritrea, Kampuchea, and Nicaragua ("Deux heures après minuit", Grasset). His other works include "Le marché commun" (n.e. PUF, 1960), "L'Europe interdite" (du Seuil, 1977), and "La mer est ronde" (n.e. Gallimard, 1980). He has been a French and European civil servant and a member of the Commission of the European Communities; he served as French Ambassador to Spain from 1976-77, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the de Gaulle government, and as Minister of Foreign Trade in the Pompidou administration. He is a member of the National Assembly and of the European Parliament.*

Outside, it was dark but not black. With no chimney, the door was left open to let smoke out. Through it I could see the snow-covered slope the house was built on, the dense mass of oak trees higher up and, towering above them, the icy crest of the mountains. Lower down, between here and the river, there were geometric terraced fields. It all looked like an engraving, coldly etched in black and white. Nearby there were other stone and mud houses, with other men drinking tea by a dying fire, and other weapons propped against the walls. Not far off, there were Soviet garrisons, protected by triple minefields. In the distance there were other valleys and other mountains. Here, the cold bit into one's bones.

One of the men stamped out the embers and closed the door. Beyond this house, beyond Kunar province, beyond Afghanistan, the world was going about its business. Cocoa seven cents lower on the Chicago market; the Fourth Bureau of the Third Directorate in Moscow deciding to let Japan and Germany compete to supply *R-223* computers; a young couple falling in love in Tegucigalpa; the temperature in the shade in Perpignan up five degrees; Africans dying of famine; motorists in Rome cursing the traffic; marriages breaking up; a fire in an old people's home; children crying; a Chinese financier striking it rich; a girl discovering she was beautiful; a mild earthquake in California; three people killed by a bomb in a cinema; an anti-cyclone over the Azores. Here, it was simply cold.

VETERANS OF earlier wars speak of warmth and comradeship. There was a front; there was a hierarchy; there were orders. The allies were here: the enemy was there. The objective was simple. There were positions to defend, and there was natural solidarity. Of course, there was fear—and exhaustion, and dirt, and blood. But that fear was not like this fear. It came and went; it hit you, like sunstroke. This fear, in this war, is your constant companion: at night, cold and alone. You meet someone on the path, a woman going to the well, a child in the mountains with a herd of goats. Whose side are they on? Will they talk? Whom will they warn? Which of the people I saw yesterday will turn out to be a traitor—and when? Is there an ambush just ahead, in this pass with the sun behind the mountainside? Or will it be later, in the forest, among the tall trees? It may even be tonight, when we undo our belts in the house we thought was safe.

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In this war, fear does not strike you: it lives inside you like the cold—secretly, in your bones. Don't look at your watch. Everywhere, always, the time is two hours after midnight. That's what it means to be a guerrilla fighter—to be alone even with your companions, to hide but have to show yourself, to attack yet try to survive. It's cold and lonely, even in daylight, even at midday, even when we halt and huddle together in a mountain hut to drink a last mug of tea. Telling stories, asking questions, talking: that's our only hope of keeping warm.

SITTING ON THE GROUND WITH US were some of the leaders of the military Resistance in Eastern Afghanistan. One of them was puzzled:

"When the Americans were fighting in Viet Nam, I heard on the radio that there were anti-American demonstrations in Paris, London, Germany, and even in the United States. Governments had to protect public buildings, hundreds of thousands of people were on the march. They burned the American flag. Famous singers sang protest songs. Actors signed declarations. Some of the marches were led by Prime Ministers.

"But here in Afghanistan, every day, the Soviets are doing far worse things—ten times, a hundred times worse—than the Americans did in Viet Nam. It's obvious: they want to destroy our people and take over our country. There's nothing they won't do. You've seen the villages they've burned down. On the mountain you met some of the people heading for refugee camps. You've seen the children with their legs blown off at the knee by anti-personnel mines.

"And tell me—how many demonstrators have there been in Paris, or Rome, or London, protesting against the Soviet attack? Just tell me—how many?"

The guards changed over. The fire was lit again for those who had just come in, shaking the snow from their shoulders. The tea was heated, the door was left open again to let the smoke out.

There were twenty-four of us altogether: two combat groups, the one I was travelling with, and the one whose territory we were crossing. Some of them were asleep, some were cleaning their rifles; others were catching up on their five daily prayers—they'd missed some the day before because we were on the move. There was so little space that they had to take it in turns to pray: there was just enough room for one man to kneel.

One of them had asked me why I was here. They knew very well why they were. They had decided to say *No*—and to face the consequences. And I knew why I was with them. One day, I too had decided to say no.

It was after the French television reporter Jacques Abouchar had been captured. The ambush had clearly been meant to capture him, for all the bullet-marks on the lorries were at wheel and engine level, to stop it but not to kill. Shortly afterwards, at a diplomatic reception, the Soviet Ambassador in Pakistan had come up to the Islamabad correspondent of *Agence-France-Presse*.

"The Abouchar affair", he told him, "is a warning. The next Frenchman who tries to cross the frontier with the so-called 'Resistance'—whoever he is—will be killed. The Red Army will take care of that."

The *AFP* man, astonished by this unusual cocktail-party conversation, asked very professionally: "May I quote you, Your Excellency?"

The Soviet Ambassador seized him by the arm and said: "It's not a question of '*may*'. You *must*." So *AFP* carried the report.

The second French television channel, *Antenne 2*, then broadcast a debate on the subject. The newspaper editors and proprietors who took part in it declared that, after the Soviet threat, they could no longer accept the responsibility of sending a reporter to the Afghan rebels.

That evening I made up my mind, and set about making contact with the Mujaheddin. For them, the capture of Jacques Abouchar, and the reactions to it, had been a triple blow. In the first place, their honour was at stake: he had been their guest. Then, their reputation had suffered: they had been made to look incompetent and irresponsible. Worst of all, the USSR had got what it wanted: silence—a news blackout on their Afghan war.

To survive in the Resistance, you need food and weapons, but also hope. There can be no hope if others remain silent. The Mujaheddin in the mountains, forests, and marshlands need to know that they are not forgotten.

THE BORDER ZONE between Pakistan and Afghanistan is known as "the tribal area" or "the North-West Frontier". This huge area used to belong to the British Empire. Today, it is part of Pakistan; but neither the British nor the Pakistanis have ever completely subdued it. Inhabited like Eastern Afghanistan by Pathan tribes whose "ferocity" Kipling made famous, it remains a law unto itself. The Pakistan Government has installed free electricity in exchange for the right to build some metalled roads: but beyond these narrow strips of tarmac there is no law and order outside the ranks of the Pakistan Army. A corpse by the roadside bears witness only to tribal custom: whether struck from behind or in front, whether the vendetta was old or new.

The Afghan refugee camps, with their three million inhabitants, are further islands of autonomy in this tribal archipelago. They recall the remark by the Governor of Kabul prison: "If only a million Afghans remain, then the Revolution will be that much easier! . . ." In the camps, senior officers of the former Royal Army are fretting the time away, waiting for the partisans to win. Amputees are learning to walk again, on crutches. Women are pining for their children. Families are mourning their dead—like those from a village in Kunar in 1980, where the Communists shot more than 1,500 people. Their firing was so inaccurate that when bulldozers covered the bodies with earth, the communal grave stirred: those who were only wounded were struggling to get out. The bulldozers added more earth.

To cross the tribal area requires precautions. Anyone you meet could be an informer, if not a double or triple agent. The mistake to avoid is staying in a hotel in Peshawar or

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Quetta before setting out for the frontier—or trying to come by air from either town. Half-a-dozen secret services would immediately be told that "some Westerners" were heading for Afghanistan. So, after clearing my bags through customs at Karachi, and without leaving the airport, I caught a flight four hours later for the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, where foreigners normally go on business, whether commercial or diplomatic.

There a car was waiting, with two friends from the Afghan Resistance. Less than five minutes after our arrival, we disappeared in the traffic, and made for a safe house in the frontier zone. We stayed in the car until it stopped in the courtyard and the gates were closed behind us. Then we were disguised as Afghans. Until it was dark we stayed indoors, speaking not a word of French when anyone else was present. We crossed the tribal area on the floor of the car for fear of Pakistani army checkpoints. We reached another house with windowless mud walls, and waited another night.

The Mujaheddin had sent a commando group to escort us. In a country where a man going out for a box of matches would sooner forget his clothes than his Kalashnikov, no one paid attention to our armed patrol—everyone carries weapons all the time. Twice we were stopped by rifle-toting officials: once "to have some idea of who's at large in our country"; again, because the military had blocked all movement so as to facilitate some obscure negotiations between the tribal elders and the Government, about social-security reimbursements.

The road petered out, and we had to walk. The landscape was superb, on the grand scale: it was not just the altitude that took one's breath away. We were now more than 150 kilometres north of Peshawar. Here the land has natural gradations. At the foot of the valleys, near the riverbed, there is a huge wasteland of stones. Further up, there are terraced fields with stone retaining walls; then square flat-roofed houses, also built of stones. Then comes the forest; then the snow-covered mountains rise to more than 15,000 feet, their tops hidden in the clouds.

Slowly we climbed up the terraced valleys, from the stream to the river, from the river to the torrent, from the torrent to the falls. The few houses we passed looked like fortresses, their stone and mud walls pierced with arrow-slits and rising in a turret. Were the tallest a sign of wealth or power, as in medieval Europe? "Oh, no! They simply show that their owners are unpopular and need better defences. . . ."

Then there were no more houses, and fewer terraced fields. The slope turned into a cliff. Snow began to fall, and froze on the ground. With it came darkness. Far below and behind us, the lights of Pakistan disappeared. In front of us, above us, and out of sight, was the frontier.

CROSSING A FRONTIER ILLEGALLY to join a guerrilla group always gives one a tightening in the chest. You're leaving a general, passive form of clandestine life, where all that matters is to pass unobserved, for another kind, where you have to show yourself—but only to certain people. It means exchanging one risk—of arrest and deportation—for others which may prove more serious. It means action instead of waiting. Students facing an exam, or athletes on the starting-line, know the feeling very well. It's one of liberation. Now at last we're all on equal terms, because to be afraid is normal—for all of us, including the enemy. All that matters now is to go on despite one's fear. I once heard Carmen Ordonez, the wife of the great Spanish bullfighter, call it "the time when the beard grows fastest."

We crossed the Afghan frontier on foot, at night, in the snow, through a mountain pass so high that there were no patrols. It was barely a pass at all, just a place where the ridge very slightly dipped. After waiting in a smoky hut which in summer was a mule-drivers' shelter, we set off again at daybreak. We left the snow behind us, then the forest; finally, we reached the first rebel outpost. On our way down the rocky path, armed men appeared as if from nowhere and silently fell in with the column.

By now the clouds were low and dark. On the ground, against the walls of the terraced fields, vestiges of snow had turned to ice. A fierce wind was blowing. For another hour we went on, in single file. Before long our column had become a crowd, a whole people on the march. Then, at a signal, one group fired in the air. At once, from here and there, the whole valley responded, and other valleys too. The whole province seemed to be firing its weapons. It

Change?

London

PRESIDENT BABRAK *Karmal's removal—for that is what it is—ends an uncomfortable year for the Soviet-backed régime in Afghanistan. Karmal's frequent absences from Kabul, officially for medical treatment in the USSR, coupled with evidence of his less than cordial relations with the Gorbachov leadership, caused speculation and uncertainty. The naming of a new leader—the former Head of Security, Major-General Najibullah—suggests the conflicts have been resolved, at least for the time being. Mr Karmal has not been ruthlessly ousted as his predecessor, Hafizullah Amin, was. And he has not been completely removed from the political scene.*

BUT THE TRICKLE OF CONVERTS **since last autumn, and the attempt to broaden the social base of the régime, gives few grounds for believing an eventual political reconciliation in Afghanistan will be possible under the Communist régime. The present ruling party, whoever is leading it, will be associated with the "scorched earth" policies of the Soviet military long after any Soviet withdrawal. The report on Human Rights in Afghanistan published by the UN Economic and Social Council earlier this year testifies to the inordinate brutality inflicted on the villages of the Afghan resistance, and almost one third of Afghanistan's population of 1979 now lives outside the country.**

IT WILL TAKE MORE *than a change of leader to change the policies of the Afghan régime. And it will take more than diplomatic manoeuvring in Geneva.*

THE TIMES (*London*)

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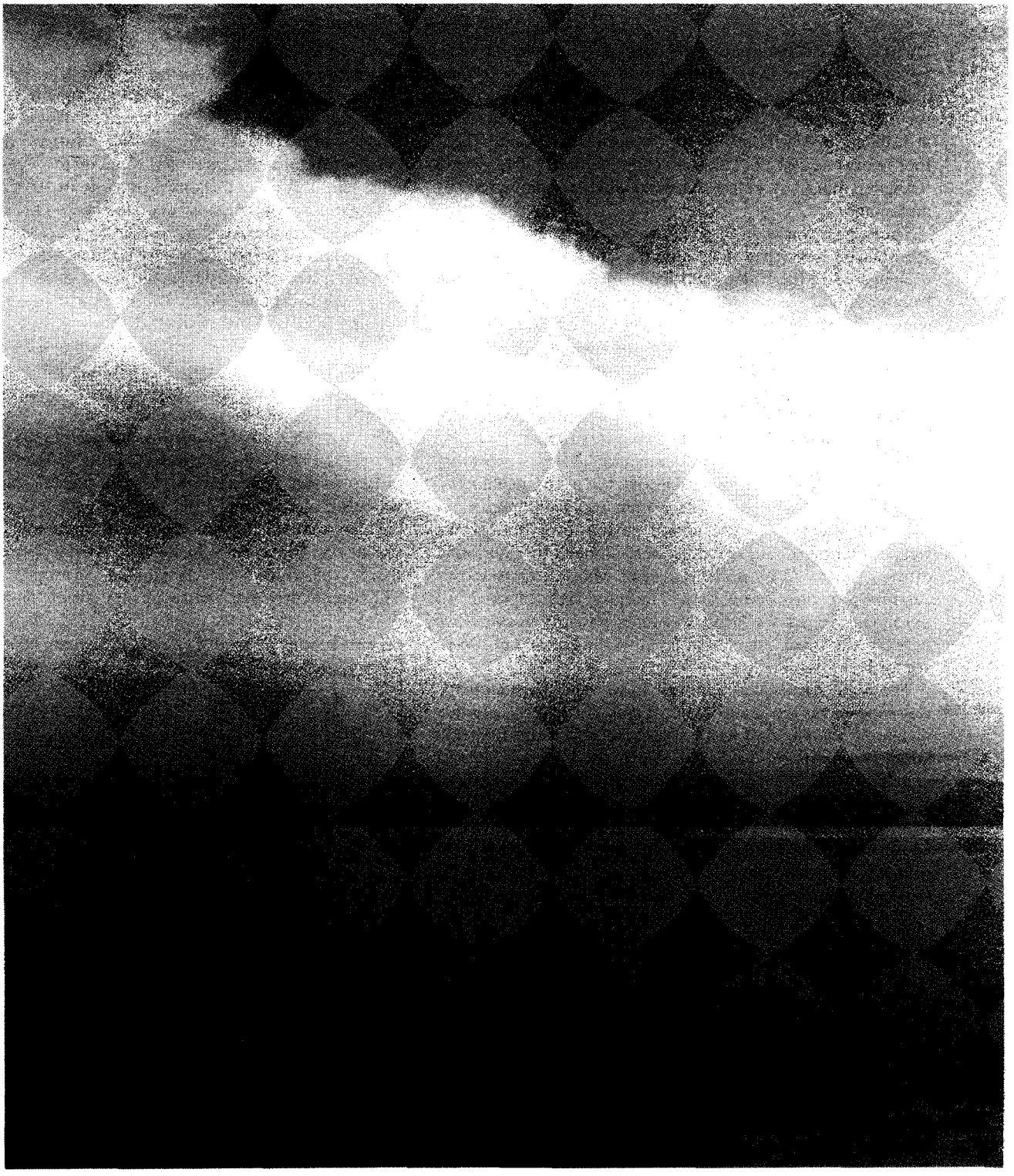

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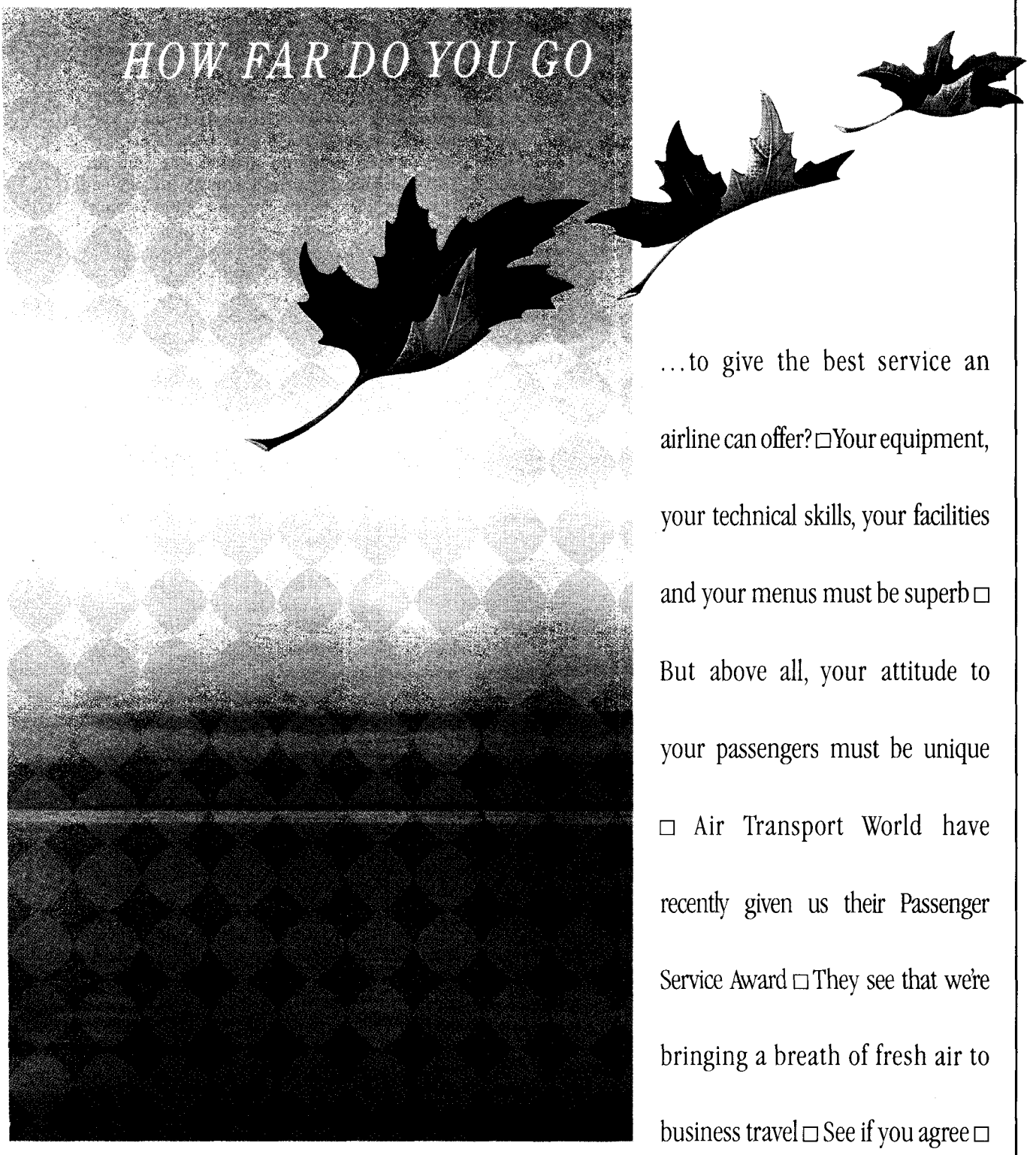

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A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

AIR CANADA

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was no longer an echo, but a vast fantastic drum-roll.

In the valley, we came across some large plane trees grouped around a field of boulders. It was a cemetery. The earth was darker where two new graves had been dug, each with its rough headstone, for two Mujaheddin who had been killed in the latest battle. On sticks around the graves there were streamers with inscriptions from the Koran, white ribbons, and green flags fluttering in the evening wind.

In the Kabul military cemetery, the Communists honour their dead in similar fashion; but their banners are red. That cemetery—they call it "the Square of the Martyrs of the Revolution"—is sometimes so full of flags that it looks like a fairground. Out here, the Mujaheddin call their dead "the Martyrs of the Faith."

UNDER THE PORCH of our next safe house, which was also used as a mosque, Alain Boinet of the *Guilde européenne du raid*, handed out aid collected in Europe, from France and elsewhere. The Mujaheddin leaders sat nursing their Kalashnikovs; the tribal elders, often called "the greybeards", carried respectable umbrellas.

The aid was in local currency, easier to carry than food or clothing, especially at this time of year, when snow in the passes prevents the mule-trains getting through. Four small bundles of notes were prepared, for distribution in the four main valleys. After long discussion, each of them was reduced to make up a fifth, to ensure fair shares and make certain the aid reached everyone. Handing it out in public like this—everybody knowing who gets how much—is the best guarantee. Account was taken of those whose crop had failed, whose families were in the refugee camps, who had been wounded, who had taken in orphaned children. Everybody, combatants and elders alike, solemnly gave a receipt: an inked thumbprint on a piece of paper.

Suddenly, one of the "greybeards" jumped up, waving his umbrella. "We shouldn't be taking money!" he exclaimed. "We don't need either food or clothing. We can fight naked and with empty bellies. All we need is arms and ammunition!" The others calmed him, and made him sit down with his umbrella.

Then it was time for prayers. Afterwards, they collected their weapons, the column formed up, and we set off into the mountains, on a narrow path between the rocks that was little more than footprints in the snow.

As we were leaving, one of the elders came after me and caught me by the shoulder. "Come back", he said. "Even if you bring nothing. Come back." Writing is one way of coming back.

WE HAD A LONG MARCH, some of it very high up, above the clouds. In addition to tanks, high-altitude bombing, and mass helicopter raids, the Soviets had recently adopted other tactics: troops airlifted to the mountain-tops by helicopter; night ambushes on the partisans' paths; terror attacks on villages to chase out the inhabitants and empty the countryside.

Withdrawing after their last big offensive, Soviet troops had blocked the narrow gap between the river and the steep mountain slopes. The advance party reconnoitring our route lost two men in the minefields laid by Red Army guns. This, too, was a new technique—laying mines by artillery fire. From their bases or their armoured columns, the guns fire shells which explode in mid-air into smaller projectiles. When these hit the ground, they burst, spraying anti-personnel mines over a wide area. The mines are small and pinkish, the size of a man's hand, with a sharp serrated edge. Once a group of partisans has been surprised in a village or on the march, the mines can encircle it within minutes, more securely than the barbed wire of a prison camp.

In daylight you can see them on the ground—if you keep your eyes open. But they take a long time to clear. The Mujaheddin do it by slingshot, exploding them one by one. The sound becomes familiar on a day's march, like the background noise of bombs and gunfire, or the occasional rattle of an *AK-47*. At night, the risk is appalling. There are already too many men with their legs blown off at the knee.

So we had to change our route, going back over a pass some 9-12,000 feet up, in deep snow, where no mule would venture. We were so weary that it felt as if each man was carrying a second man on his back.

The Afghan leader who greeted us at our next halt was a peasant with bright eyes who had already been wounded twice. In the next Soviet attack, he was killed. That battle cost the partisans a hundred dead; but the Red Army lost twenty tanks and several helicopters.

In the safe house, one of the men served tea. Everyone dipped his bread in a bowl of mutton-fat broth. Then, sitting on rugs on the floor, a council of war began. Among the partisans present, the village elders were outnumbered by peasants, teachers, mullahs, and university students. There was a score of people altogether; the regional leaders plus a few birds-of-passage who were taking advantage of the usual winter lull to go to Peshawar, to see their political parties and ask for aid and weapons. They also hoped to see their families in the refugee camps.

One of the leaders said: "From now on, if we all fight separately, we're as good as dead. We've got to unite. If they don't understand that in Peshawar, then we must do it ourselves, on the spot, without waiting for them. . . ."

Another added: "The old way of fighting, with everyone taking pot-shots on his own account and then going home—it won't work any more." Yet that is how the Mujaheddin began, and how it still goes on in places, pinning the Red Army down for five years. With all the advantages and all the strength of spontaneity—but all its weaknesses too.

Amin, who controls the Wardak area, had never before met Massoud, the leader from Panshir; when he had tried to make contact, a rival group had barred his way and disarmed his escort. Nor did Amin know Abdul, the chief of the Kabul partisans. I had to introduce them myself.

"Who said we've been fighting for only five years?" asked Abdul. "I'm 27, and I've been fighting since I was 17."

"That's right", said Walid. "Ten years. We were together in the last year at school. You were already fighting the sons of Communist officers then. . . ."

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FOR THEM, IT HAD ALL BEGUN when Prince Daoud had overthrown his cousin, the old King. With help from Communist army officers, he had wanted to build "a progressive, nationalist Afghanistan", on Titoist lines. But when he saw that his supporters were taking over the administration on behalf of the Soviet Union, he tried to disown them and arrest their leaders. It was too late. The Communist officers turned the army against him, and he was gunned down in the palace with his wife and children. The Secretary-General of the Communist Party, Tarakî, took over in his place, and Soviet-style Marxism became the official rule. It was then that Abdul left high school and set up his own Resistance movement on the outskirts of the capital.

"I didn't care", he said, "whether Daoud was the King's cousin or not. What I saw was that atheistic Communists were taking over; and I'll fight them as long as I live. I don't want their kind of society—or the old one either. I want ours—an Islamic society of justice and solidarity."

To begin with, in the towns, there had been some sympathy for the USSR. It had seemed to stand for power and progress. In Kabul, many middle-class people had believed that without Soviet help—which meant the Communist Party—Afghan society would never achieve either political maturity or material advance. Several times I heard the Mujaheddin themselves equate "technology" with the Soviet Union.

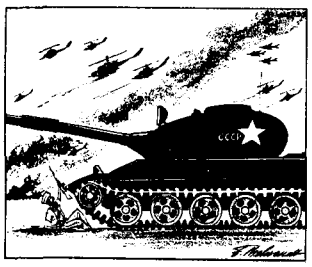
But Tarakî had not brought technology: he had brought disorder and terror. Unrealistic, ruinous farm reform; unpopular teaching changes; militant atheism; arbitrary arrests; summary executions; mass disappearances. To establish the power of the Communist Party, Tarakî tried to destroy all others. When the town of Herat rebelled, it was bombed; in a single day, 20,000 people lost their lives. In a number of provinces, the mullahs encouraged the peasantry to take up arms. Amin's story was typical:

"In Wardak, there had hardly been a Communist Party before. Then Party officials arrived from Kabul and began arresting the mullahs and elders. Those who were arrested we never saw again. The Communists recruited a local militia, offering them money and food. Today, those people are the Soviets' fiercest supporters and our bitterest opponents. They've chosen their cause, and they'll die for it, with their children if need be, even if the Red Army withdraws. There are Soviet advisers, too; but they don't show themselves. The Kabul Party officials and their militia have taken over schools and hospitals, and turned them into military bases.

"So Soviet propaganda accuses the Resistance of 'attacking schools and hospitals'—and it's true, but only because they've become Communist headquarters. The Communists force people to go there and learn to read—to read propaganda. They burn copies of the Koran. They put boys and girls together in school. And they even rope in the elders, the 'greybeards', who may not have been able to read, but were very much respected. Now they're forced to study Communism, the Class Struggle, and the Soviet Union's internationalist mission. Anyone who protests simply disappears.

Who Goes Home?

Islamabad



"IT WOULD BE **very difficult for the Russians to abandon the strategic position they hold in Afghanistan and foolish for us to imagine that they would give that up voluntarily", President Zia told me.**

"Just look at the immense new infrastructure they have created there—road, rail and pipe-line links with the Soviet Union, bridges over the River Oxus, permanent air bases. This shows that they intend to stay—or at least to be able to come back quickly."

THE PRESIDENT'S ANALYSIS *was confirmed by separate talks I had in Islamabad with his expert advisers. They told me the latest satellite photographs of Soviet air bases in the west of Afghanistan showed that these were now protected by five separate concentric defence systems, one of them being a ring of "Sam" missiles.*

As the Mujihadeen did not possess a single aircraft these elaborate defences were clearly set up with a future East-West conflict in the Persian Gulf in mind.

THIS IS *a report on an extensive interview with President Zia of Pakistan about the prospects of a peace settlement in Afghanistan arising from the UN-sponsored talks between Afghan and Pakistani officials now taking place in Geneva.*

THE MILITARY PROBLEM **was still, in Zia's eyes, the key one. It was true that, as the UN mediator, Senor Diego Cordovez, had repeatedly announced, three of the four elements of the peace package had been agreed.**

These cover the principles of non-intervention, international guarantees, and the return of the three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. But this, he stressed, did not mean that 75 per cent of the work of negotiation had been done. It could mean that less than 5 per cent was completed because everything hinged on agreement over Soviet troop withdrawal, the fourth element, now being tackled again.

THE PRESIDENT AGREED *that even if the Red Army did start to withdraw on an agreed time-table, any flare-up of Mujihadeen activity could be used by Moscow as a pretext to stay put, on the grounds that "foreign interference" was still going on.*

"After all, who is to identify non-interference? An outside observer force will anyway be needed. Without that, it is all a nonsense", he said crisply.

ZIA, WHO RUNS PAKISTAN **like a strict but conscientious regimental commander, is concerned above all else in this Afghan imbroglio to fulfil the personal pledge he has given to the three million refugees on his soil.**

This is the promise that they would be enabled to go home in honour and in safety, and Zia is a man who sticks to his word. It is here that he sees himself, Mr Gorbachev, the Russian leader, and the diligent Mr Cordovez locked into a vicious circle of false options.

Gordon Brook-Shepherd
in the SUNDAY TELEGRAPH *(London)*

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"Well, when that began, the greybeards met in secret and decided to send a delegation to Kabul. The Government's propaganda called its opponents 'bandits.' So the greybeards said to the Government: 'Please help us to defend ourselves against these bandits who are attacking our schools and hospitals.' And the Government gave them 18,000 rifles—which the greybeards passed on to the Mujaheddin! When the militia got wind of it, they managed to take half of them back. But that was where we got our first 9,000 rifles.

"I wasn't in Afghanistan at that time—I was working for a firm in Iran. My father wrote to me: 'Come home and fight.' Like my grandfather, he's a man people respect: he fought against the British too. He used to say he was famous for three things: courage, learning, and hospitality. To hand on all three qualities, he gave my eldest brother a rifle, the next one a book, and to me a tablecloth.

"But my elder brothers live abroad with their families, in Europe, and they didn't want to come back. So I took over the rifle myself.

"I came in through Pakistan, over the mountains, with pack-animals carrying weapons and food. It was a big convoy—mules, horses, and camels. Coming along the track—you know how narrow it is—I met another caravan travelling the opposite way, towards Pakistan. It was my mother, my younger brothers and sisters, my nephew—and my father. I'd had no news of him since getting his letter in Iran. They'd all been in Kabul, where at one time it was easier to hide than in the country. But now it was just as dangerous, and they'd decided to make for a refugee camp.

"Since those first 9,000 rifles, we've had practically no more weapons. So there's not much we can do against *MiG*s and helicopters. The Soviets build command-posts and surround them with triple minefields. There's not much we can do against those, either. But 80% of our country is still free; and we're willing to die, if we have to, for freedom and the faith. Our ancestors did, and so can we, for the sake of our children."

TARAKÎ, WHO HAD GONE TO MOSCOW, came back with Soviet permission to eliminate his rivals in the opposing wing of the Party. But his leading opponent, Hafizullah Amin,

The Price of "Muddling Through". . . .

WHAT OF THE IDEA **that Moscow coveted Afghanistan because of its place on the map—from which both Iran and Pakistan may be menaced, and a grab prepared at the northern coast of the Indian Ocean? Afghanistan is certainly one of those unfortunate "crossroads" countries that give on to strategically tempting prizes, which is why it has been so often invaded.**

But Russia invaded Afghanistan in December 1979 not for strategic but for immediate reasons. Policy-making, Henry Kissinger said, is always a competition between the important and the urgent, in which the urgent tends to win. By the end of 1979, Moscow judged it urgent to save its puppet régime in Kabul from internal overthrow. The régime, which was home-grown, had come to power through a struggle between political factions, both nominally "progressive."

BUT THE WINNING LEADER, *Hafizullah Amin, quickly proved to be far too progressive for Afghan stomachs. His Marxist economic policies alienated the city dwellers. His secularism outraged the devout Moslem faith of the tribes, and his brutality revolted even his associates. The Army, which had got rid of his predecessors, clearly stood poised to send him the same way. Moscow decided it must send its troops to rescue the Afghan "revolution."*

But not Amin himself. A figure from the blackest melodrama—which other graduate of Columbia University had had his political mentor smothered with a pillow?—he had typed himself with the Russians as a man to be ditched and he survived the arrival of the Soviet 105th Airborne Division at Kabul airport on December 24 by only three days. His violent death in his fortified headquarters did not, however, quell the trouble Moscow had anticipated.

AMIN'S OPPONENTS **had already shown themselves strong enough to seize Herat, one of the country's largest cities, for three days in the previous year. The arrival of the Soviet Army merely precipitated a country-wide uprising. Were their Afghan opponents a unified force like the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army, the Russians would now either be in dire straits or else have found themselves forced to commit many more than the 10 divisions they maintain in the country. But the Afghan resistance is incurably factional.**

THE ROOT OF *the Afghans' divisions is their tribalism. But that is also the main obstacle to the Russians' wish to impose their control on the countryside. Not that they have not tried.*

There is, indeed, something almost pathetic about the Soviets' efforts to translate the centralisation that sat so easily on the grandchildren of serfs to the wildly individualistic society of the Pathans. Anyone who has seen a tribal warrior stalking hawk-eyed through the bazaars of Peshawar, trailed by his convoy of bell-tented womenfolk whom Kipling's Tommies feared almost as much as the men themselves, would weep for an apparatchik tasked to establish a party cell in their village.

THE RUSSIANS HAVE, **in fact, now shrunk from the attempt. Their war effort seems to have passed through four stages. At first, they tried to win quickly. Then they sought to control key areas. Then they embarked on a policy of depopulating the interior. Lastly, they turned to closing the frontiers, across which nearly a quarter of the population has fled, many of them to slip back periodically on guerrilla forays.**

Current Russian tactics seem to be a combination of depopulation plus border and key area control. They appear to have abandoned a settled government as an aim except in the very long run. They play, of course, upon tribal and factional divisions. They have Quislings. They prefer to use the remnants of the Afghan Army in the front line. They commit their own troops chiefly as task forces. But victory is a prospect they now seem reconciled to postponing.

WHAT WAR DOES THAT *remind one of? Not Viet Nam. There the Americans intervened to protect a government they wished to maintain against external invasion. Their initial strategy was to teach the rural population to defend itself, while the US Army held the frontiers. When that strategy failed, they sought to "Vietnamise" the conflict by making the South Vietnamese Army equal to the struggle.*

No, it is the German campaign in Yugoslavia which

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was forewarned; and he killed Tarakî first. When Hafizullah Amin took over, a second wave of partisans joined the Resistance, including some army officers who were Communists (but of Tarakî's group). The whole garrison of Asmar, headed by its Colonel, decamped for the *maquis* with its weapons. Provinces like Nuristan, or the Shi'ite region of central Afghanistan, remained virtually autonomous. The official Afghan army repeatedly failed to subdue them. When its soldiers were not deserting the ranks, they were supplying the Resistance with arms and information.

IT WAS THEN that Walid, a trainee *MiG* pilot at the Air Force College, deserted and went home to head a partisan group.

"Are you sorry you didn't end up flying *MiG*s?"

"The training was interesting."

"So you've never been on the Soviet side?"

"I'm a good Muslim. I've always known that one day I would have to make the choice I did. A long time ago, I was sent on a course to the USSR. They took us on a conducted tour of an anti-religious museum—it used to be the monastery of Kiev. Almost all their churches are now anti-religious museums. In the main hall there was a glass-covered coffin, with the mummified body of a nun. On the wall there was a big placard:

Weight of the nun's body: 43.75 kilograms

Underneath, they gave the chemical composition:

Carbon:	12.325 kilograms
Nitrogen:	3.2 kilograms
Calcium:	1.6 kilograms

and so on—then

TOTAL:	43.75 kilograms

And then, in huge letters:

THERE IS NO ROOM FOR A SOUL!

When I was sent on leave, I came here, and I've stayed here, with my own people."

offers the miserable similarities. There it was the overthrow of Hitler's client régime in March 1941 which prompted him to invade. When the invasion provoked revolt, he committed no more force than was necessary to secure the cities and trunk routes. His commanders, in their turn, contented themselves with keeping the partisans on the move, playing on their differences and terrorising the population. The strategy, in short, was designed to serve internal, not external requirements.

SO, TOO, BY THE **best judgment, is the Russians' in Afghanistan. As Henry Bradsher, expert American observer of the war, has put it, the Russians foresaw the danger not merely of losing their indirect grip on the Afghan government, but of the country falling into "a chaotic anti-Communist condition, with strong Islamic overtones." Since the area of the Soviet Union which it borders is inhabited not merely by Moslems but also by peoples of the same blood as the Afghan rebels, they had the strongest possible reasons for averting that outcome.**

FOR WHAT OUTCOME *do the Russians now hope? A cynical view is that, having failed to win quickly, they now look to profit from the added instability their misery-making war brings to an unstable region. If that means hoping to extend Soviet influence into Iran or Pakistan, both hopes are perilous. Pakistan, bustling and energetic, today looks readier for take-off than take-over. Iran, to any predator fearful of contagion by Islamicism, is the equivalent of an AIDS carrier.*

MUCH MORE PERSUASIVE **in this view is the A. J. P. Taylor theory of accident: that they hope to muddle through a war they muddled into.**

And it is there that the parallel with Viet Nam definitively fails. For the Americans, when they found their war no longer served the national purpose, had available the political mechanisms to disengage. Russia, bereft of an electoral voice or will, is driven by pride to persist in error.

Meanwhile, the Afghans pay the price.

John Keegan

in the DAILY TELEGRAPH (*London*)

WHEN THE KABUL COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT showed itself unable to cope with the situation, the Soviets decided to intervene "officially". The Russians are experienced colonists in this part of the world. They conquered the Caucasus and the Muslim provinces of the USSR by sheer military strength, but also by timing—waiting for the chieftains to quarrel and the Resistance to lose its impetus. At the beginning of their Afghan campaign, they were not much worried about a few warriors with old rifles up in the mountains. They knew what to do: call the rebels "bandits", guard the main roads, the big towns, and the three strategic bases facing Iran, Pakistan, and the Gulf. Meanwhile, with the help of the Party, they would establish their Socialist State. The "bandits" in the mountains would finally lose heart. Chairman Leonid Brezhnev told Jacques Chaban-Delmas, who was cutting short his Moscow visit in protest at the Soviet invasion:

> "In three weeks we shall have re-established order and be able to withdraw."

The Red Army crossed the frontier, and airlifted troops to Kabul and other towns. In principle, it was Hafizullah Amin who had requested Soviet help. In reality, he fought the invaders for several hours: he and his family were killed in the presidential palace. The Soviets spread the story that he had been "a CIA agent".

BABRAK KARMAL, who arrived with the Soviet troops, brought a touch of moderation to the régime. He freed a few prisoners, and followed the traditional policy of playing off one family, one tribe, one chieftain against another. But there are many mountains in Afghanistan, and many valleys. The invasion led to a fresh wave of recruits for the Resistance. Anouar, the national wrestling champion, was due to represent Afghanistan at the Moscow Olympics; at a

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stopover, he managed to escape, and became head of a partisan band. Massoud, an engineer, overrode party rivalries to unite the Mujaheddin in Panshir.

When the Soviets realised that time was not on their side, they changed tactics. One partisan leader at our council of war compared the Resistance to a tree. "For four years", he said, "the Soviets merely cut off troublesome branches. Now they're trying to dig us up by the roots."

"They don't respect anything", added another, by profession the local story-teller. "They make war even in winter.

"One night last week, they sent commandos out from their base at Chagasarai to arrange an ambush on one of our trails. Allah be praised, they struck too soon, and caught only the leading detachment, Mawlawi's group. The other two, from two other political parties, were further back, so they could deploy and rescue the first lot. But what's going to happen if the Soviets start operating as we do, on our own trails, and at night?"

"All right; so why don't we attack them now?" argued another counsellor. "There's a whole armoured column of them."

"It's easy for you to say that: you don't come from round here. If we fire a single shot, their planes will come and burn down our villages. There are still people in this valley, you know."

"Well, can't you get them out of it? Otherwise, won't you always be so afraid of reprisals that you'll never be able to fight?"

"But they help us! Without them, where should we be for food—or information?"

"I propose we set up an ambush. I know a good place, where no one's been living for ages. After all, we can't just let the Soviets drive their trucks on our roads and do nothing about it!"

"I'm going back to my own valley. I've got to be there if there's going to be a Soviet raid."

"I'm leaving this minute. We'll have to start now if we want to hit the Soviet column when the sun comes up."

"I'm not coming. I have to be in Peshawar in two days' time. Anyway, with you Pathans it's impossible to tell who's right. You contradict yourselves all the time, and you never admit you're wrong."

More tea was handed round.

"In quite a few areas", said one of the partisan leaders, "the Resistance has already united."

"It will, it will", said another. "When you catch it, the fish is always fresh."

"We all have to do our best", said a third.

"And what is truth?" asked the story-teller. "Only Allah can be believed."

THE COUNCIL OF WAR came to an end. Some went to sleep, others lit cigarettes; those who were to mount the ambush put their boots on, buckled their belts, and picked up their weapons. The next time the Soviets started an offensive in Paktia, the Mujaheddin would be able to bring reinforcements from a long way off, perhaps even by the truckload.

OUMAYOUM, a tall, bearded, middle-aged man in a turban, had taken up position in his sniper's emplacement, a dry-stone shelter blending into the landscape, with a good view of the main road some 1,500 feet below.

"Are you staying here?" asked Walid.

"It's my usual place. I can shoot very well from here."

"Don't fire until the others do. I need time to position the mortar. So do the two with the *RPG-7*."

Walid and the rest of the party vanished among the rocks and trees. Dawn began to appear in the east, a slow tide of light rising over the mountain-tops and creeping down into the valley towards the road. The Soviet column would soon be here.

A scout signalled that it was approaching, headed by a tank, a jeep, and two trucks. When the tank drew level with Oumayoum, he trained his Lee-Enfield on it. The tank commander opened his turret to look back at the column. Oumayoum fired: a direct hit. The turret fell shut; the tank's driver slammed on his brakes and shot into reverse. The tank crashed into the jeep.

Oumayoum laughed. The other Mujaheddin opened up with the mortar, but their fire was less accurate. The tank pulled clear and raced down the road. The *RPG* rocket-launcher hit one of the trucks: it burst into flames. The other truck pushed it into a ditch, picked up the survivors, and roared away. The partisans emerged from behind the terrace walls on the valley side and the oak trees on the other. Shouting in triumph, they climbed on to the jeep.

But now it was they who made a good target. Halfway up the slope, in a deserted village, a Soviet armoured car, a machine-gun carrier, had been guarding the flank. No one had seen it: it must have been waiting all night. Creeping out from a ruined house, it headed for the road and stopped, just below Oumayoum's position.

"Look out!" he shouted. "Look out! There's an armoured car!"

No one heard him. He fired in the air; but the others thought he was celebrating the ambush. The machine-gun in the armoured car's turret slowly traversed, pointing downwards to get the Mujaheddin in its sights. Oumayoum dropped his rifle and leaped on to the roof of the car. Grabbing the barrel of the gun, he pulled it upwards with all his strength. The machine-gunner fired burst after burst, trying hard to lower the gun; but he had less leverage than Oumayoum, and all the shots went high. Oumayoum clung to the barrel. Then the firing stopped. Some of the partisans had scrambled up and dropped a grenade into the car.

They all began talking at once, describing what they had seen and done, how the lorry had exploded, how the tank had smashed into the jeep.

"Let's take a photo", said Walid. "We'll send it to Peshawar. Come on, all of you, come round the jeep. You too, Oumayoum."

"I can't", said Oumayoum. He was still on top of the armoured car.

"You can let go now. The gun won't fly away."

Everybody laughed.

"I can't let go. My hand's stuck. It's burned on."

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When the gun had fired, the barrel he was holding had become red-hot. Some of them tried to prise his fingers off it, but they were burned to the bone. So was the palm of his hand.

"Try to save that finger", said Oumayoum: "It's the one I shoot with."

A rumbling roar filled the valley. Soviet helicopters were on their way. One of Oumayoum's companions drew his knife and cut him free, doing his best to save the trigger finger. The Mujaheddin scattered behind the terrace walls and under the trees. One by one, the Soviet helicopters recovered their dead. They blew up the armoured car to prevent its being used again, then riddled the forest with machine-gun and rocket fire.

A shell struck the boulder where Walid was hidden, exploding in a shower of splinters, dust, and smoke. The helicopters climbed higher to avoid being fired on from above: only their undersides are armoured. When the smoke cleared, Walid's men ran up to see what had happened to him. Behind what was left of the boulder, he was sitting in his torn clothes, smoking a cigarette.

"Walid—it can't be—you must be dead—speak to us. . . ."

Walid took a deep drag on his cigarette. "If I'm dead", he said, "it must be my soul that's enjoying a smoke."

Some of the Mujaheddin joined the Resistance because the Communist Party had overthrown the established order; some because they sought another order in Islam. Some had seen a massacre, or lost a brother and taken his place. Some had had their villages burned down. Some could not accept that boys and girls should go to mixed schools. Some resented foreigners coming to rule their valleys. Some wanted an independent, non-aligned Afghanistan. And some, like Walid, believed that man had a soul.

At Possenhofen

for John Mole

The meadow in its mildness stretches on
And on beside the waters of the lake
Whose shallows, cloudy as kaolin, support
Boat after boat saluting to the breeze.

Games are played, bright frisbees slice the air,
Children run about, fall and get up again.
Blue smoke drifts by from meat being burnt.
People are idly kissing and talking and jigging
Up and down by rubber dugouts, blowing
With their feet; or lying pegged out on little jetties
Which sacrifice them to the fiery summer sun.
Many also are swimming, close to some swans.

They have discovered an African freedom from scale,
Each has escaped to become a function of all—
All the brown bodies, the simple vanities
Of dark brown breasts and the swanky male bulge,
Or the strip of bikini swooping down between legs
To grip the minimal groin and shout, like that one
There, in fluorescent green, "Look at my tan!"—
A whole species on holiday from hermeneutics!

As if history had no value but accretion,
Were really just a mad king or two building castles
In Spain or Bavaria, then quietly drowning,
Each in his own dark lake. But every garden
Of earthly delights will conjure the triumph of death:
Beyond the wood, the railway runs straight past
Bruegel's Spanish soldiery to soul's north,
That other nakedness, those other fires.

In today's breeze, boat after boat nods:
Beside the lake, the meadow stretches on
South of Dachau. Here nobody sees more
Than what they see. No one mentions God.

Lawrence Sail

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J. M. Coetzee

Foe

"At last I could row no further. My hands were blistered, my back was burned, my body ached. With a sigh, making barely a splash, I slipped overboard. With slow strokes, my long hair floating about me, like a flower of the sea, like an anemone, like a jellyfish of the kind you see in the waters of Brazil, I swam towards the strange island, for a while swimming as I had rowed, against the current, then all at once free of its grip, carried by the waves into the bay and on to the beach.

"There I lay sprawled on the hot sand, my head filled with the orange blaze of the sun, my petticoat (which was all I had escaped with) baking dry upon me, tired, grateful, like all the saved.

"A dark shadow fell upon me, not of a cloud but of a man with a dazzling halo about him. 'Castaway', I said with my thick dry tongue. 'I am cast away. I am all alone.' And I held out my sore hands.

"The man squatted down beside me. He was black: a Negro with a head of fuzzy wool, naked save for a pair of rough drawers. I lifted myself and studied the flat face, the small dull eyes, the broad nose, the thick lips, the skin not black but a dark grey, dry as if coated with dust. '*Agua*', I said, trying Portuguese, and made a sign of drinking. He gave no reply, but regarded me as he would a seal or a porpoise thrown up by the waves, that would shortly expire and might then be cut up for food. At his side he had a spear. I have come to the wrong island, I thought, and let my head sink: I have come to an island of cannibals.

"He reached out and with the back of his hand touched my arm. He is trying my flesh, I thought. But by and by my breathing slowed and I grew calmer. He smelled of fish, and of sheepswool on a hot day.

"Then, since we could not stay thus forever, I sat up and again began to make motions of drinking. I had rowed all morning, I had not drunk since the night before, I no longer cared if he killed me afterwards so long as I had water.

"The Negro rose and signed me to follow. He led me, stiff and sore, across sand-dunes and along a path ascending to the hilly interior of the island. But we had scarcely begun the climb when I felt a sharp hurt, and drew from my heel a long black-tipped thorn. Though I chafed it, the heel quickly swoll till I could not so much as hobble for the pain. The Negro offered me his back, indicating he would carry me. I was chary to accept, for he was a slight fellow, shorter than I. But there was no help for it. So part-way skipping on one leg, part-way riding on his back, with my petticoat gathered up and my chin brushing his springy hair, I ascended the hillside, my fear of him abating in this strange backwards embrace. He took no heed where he set his feet, I noted, but crushed under his soles whole clusters of the thorns that had pierced my skin.

"For readers reared on travellers' tales, the words *desert isle* may conjure up a place of soft sands and shady trees where brooks run to quench the castaway's thirst and ripe fruit falls into his hand, where no more is asked of him than to drowse the days away till a ship calls to fetch him home. But the island on which I was cast away was quite another place: a great rocky hill with a flat top, rising sharply from the sea on all sides except one, dotted with drab bushes that never flowered and never shed their leaves. Off the island grew beds of brown seaweed which, borne ashore by the waves, gave off a noisome stench and supported swarms of large pale fleas. There were ants scurrying everywhere, of the same kind we had in Bahia, and another pest, too, living in the dunes: a tiny insect that hid between your toes and ate its way into the flesh. Even Friday's hard skin was not proof against it: there were bleeding cracks in his feet, though he paid them no heed. I saw no snakes, but lizards came out in the heat of the day to sun themselves, some small and agile, others large and clumsy, with blue ruffs about their gills which they would flare out when alarmed, and hiss, and glare. I caught one of them in a bag and tried to tame it, feeding it flies; but it would not take dead meat, so at last I set it free. Also there were apes (of whom I will say more later) and birds, birds everywhere: not only flocks of sparrows (or so I called them) that flitted all day chirruping from bush to bush, but on the cliffs above the sea great tribes of gulls and mews and gannets and cormorants, so that the rocks were white with their droppings. And in the sea porpoises and seals and fish of all kinds. So if the company of brutes had been enough for me, I might have lived most happily on my island. But who, accustomed to the fullness of human speech, can be content with caws and chirps and screeches, and the barking of seals, and the moan of the wind?

"At last we came to the end of our climb and my porter halted to catch his breath. I found myself on a

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level plateau not far from some kind of encampment. On all sides stretched the shimmering sea, while to the east the ship that had brought me receded under full sail.

My one thought was for water. I did not care to what fate I was being borne so long as I could drink. At the gate of the encampment stood a man, dark-skinned and heavily bearded. '*Agua*' I said, making signs. He gestured to the Negro, and I saw I was talking to a European. '*Fala inglez*?' I asked, as I had learned to say in Brazil. He nodded. The Negro brought me a bowl of water. I drank, and he brought more. It was the best water I ever had.

"The stranger's eyes were green, his hair burnt to a straw colour. I judged he was sixty years of age. He wore (let me give my description of him all together) a jerkin, and drawers to below his knees, such as we see watermen wear on the Thames, and a tall cap rising in a cone, all of these made of pelts laced together, the fur outwards, and a stout pair of sandals. In his belt were a short stick and a knife. A mutineer, was my first thought: yet another mutineer, set ashore by a merciful captain, with one of the Negroes of the island, whom he has made his servant. 'My name is Susan Barton', I said. 'I was cast adrift by the crew of the ship yonder. They killed their master and did this to me.' And all at once, though I had remained dry-eyed through all the insults done me on board ship and through the hours of despair when I was alone on the waves with the captain lying dead at my feet, a handspike jutting from his eye-socket, I fell to crying. I sat on the bare earth with my sore foot between my hands, and rocked back and forth and sobbed like a child, while the stranger (who was of course the Cruso I told you of) gazed at me more as if I were a fish cast up by the waves than an unfortunate fellow-creature.

"I have told you how Cruso was dressed; now let me tell you of his habitation.

"In the centre of the flat hilltop was a cluster of rocks as high as a house. In the angle between two of these rocks Cruso had built himself a hut of poles and reeds, the reeds artfully thatched together and woven in and out of the poles with fronds to form roof and walls. A fence, with a gate that turned on leather hinges, completed an encampment in the shape of a triangle which Cruso termed his castle. Within the fence, protected from the apes, grew a patch of wild bitter lettuce. This lettuce, with fish and birds' eggs, formed our sole diet on the island, as you shall hear.

"In the hut Cruso had a narrow bed, which was all his furniture. The bare earth formed the floor. For his bed Friday had a mat under the eaves.

"Drying my tears at last, I asked Cruso for a needle or some such instrument to remove the thorn from my foot. He brought out a needle made of a fishbone with a hole pierced through the broad end, by what means I do not know, and watched in silence while I took out the thorn.

"'Let me tell you my story', said I; 'for I am sure you are wondering who I am and how I come to be here.

"'My name is Susan Barton, and I am a woman alone. My father was a Frenchman who fled to England to escape the persecutions in Flanders. His name was properly Berton, but, as happens, it became corrupted in the mouths of strangers. My mother was an Englishwoman.

"'Two years ago my only daughter was abducted and conveyed to the New World by an Englishman, a factor and agent in the carrying trade. I followed in search of her. Arriving in Bahia, I was met with denials and, when I persisted, with rudeness and threats. The officers of the Crown afforded me no aid, saying it was a matter between the English. I lived in lodgings, and took in sewing, and searched, and waited, but saw no trace of my child. So, despairing at last, and my means giving out, I embarked for Lisbon on a merchantman.

"'Ten days out from port, as if my misfortunes were not great enough, the crew mutinied. Bursting into their captain's cabin, they slew him heartlessly even while he pleaded for his life. Those of their fellows who were not with them they clapped in irons. They put me in a boat with the captain's corpse beside me, and set us adrift. Why they chose to cast me away I do not know. But those whom we have abused we customarily grow to hate, and wish never to lay eyes on again. The heart of man is a dark forest—that is one of the sayings they have in Brazil.

"'As chance would have it—or perhaps the mutiny had been so ordered—I was set adrift in sight of this island. "*Remos*!" shouted the seamen from the deck, meaning I should take up the oars and row. But I was shaking with terror. So while they laughed and jeered I drifted hither and thither on the waves, till the wind came up.

"'All morning, while the ship drew away (I believe the mutineers were of a mind to become pirates off Hispaniola), I rowed with the dead captain at my feet. My palms were soon blistered—see!—but I dared not rest, fearing that the current would draw me past your island. Worse by far than the pain of rowing was the prospect of being adrift at night in the vast emptiness of the sea, when, as I have heard, the monsters of the deep ascend in quest of prey.

"'Then at last I could row no further. My hands were raw, my back was burned, my body ached. With a sigh, making barely a splash, I slipped overboard and began to swim towards your island. The waves took me and bore me on to the beach. The rest you know.'

"WITH THESE WORDS I presented myself to Robinson Cruso, in the days when he still ruled over the island, and became his second subject, the first being his manservant Friday.

"I would gladly now recount to you the history of this singular Cruso, as I heard it from his own lips. But the stories he told me were so various, and so hard to re-

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concile one with another, that I was more and more driven to conclude age and isolation had taken their toll on his memory, and he no longer knew for sure what was truth, what fancy. Thus one day he would say his father had been a wealthy merchant whose counting-house he had quit in search of adventure. But the next day he would tell me he had been a poor lad of no family who had shipped as a cabin-boy and been captured by the Moors (he bore a scar on his arm which was, he said, the mark of the branding-iron) and escaped and made his way to the New World. Sometimes he would say he had dwelt on his island the past fifteen years, he and Friday, none but they having been spared when their ship went down. 'Was Friday then a child, when the ship went down?' I asked. 'Aye, a child, a mere child, a little slave-boy', replied Cruso. Yet at other times, as for instance when he was in the grip of the fever (and should we not believe that in fever as in drunkenness the truth speaks itself willy-nilly?), he would tell stories of cannibals, of how Friday was a cannibal whom he had saved from being roasted and devoured by fellow-cannibals. 'Might the cannibals not return to reclaim Friday?' I would ask, and he would nod. 'Is that why you are forever looking out to sea: to be warned of the return of the cannibals?' I would pursue; and he would nod again. So in the end I did not know what was truth, what was lies, and what was mere rambling.

"But let me return to my relation.

"Tired to the bone, I asked to lie down, and fell at once into a deep sleep. The sun was sinking when I woke, and Friday was preparing our supper. Though it was no more than fish roasted over coals and served with lettuce, I ate with gusto. Grateful to have my belly full and my feet on solid earth again, I expressed my thanks to this singular saviour of mine. I would have told him more about myself too, about my quest for my stolen daughter, about the mutiny. But he asked nothing, gazing out instead into the setting sun, nodding to himself as though a voice spoke privately inside him that he was listening to.

"'May I ask, sir', said I, after a while: 'Why in all these years have you not built a boat and made your escape from this island?'

"'And where should I escape to?' he replied, smiling to himself as though no answer were possible.

"'Why, you might sail to the coast of Brazil, or meet a ship and be saved.'

"'Brazil is hundreds of miles distant, and full of cannibals', said he. 'As for sailing-ships, we shall see sailing-ships as well and better by staying at home.'

"'I beg to disagree', said I. 'I spent two long years in Brazil and met no cannibals there.'

"'You were in Bahia', said he. 'Bahia is naught but an island on the rim of the Brazilian forests.'

"So I early began to see it was a waste of breath to urge Cruso to save himself. Growing old on his island kingdom with no one to say him nay had so narrowed his horizon—when the horizon all around us was so vast and so majestic!—that he had come to be persuaded he knew all there was to know about the world. Besides, as I later found, the desire to escape had dwindled within him. His heart was set on remaining to his dying day king of his tiny realm. In truth it was not fear of pirates or cannibals that held him from making bonfires or dancing about on the hilltop waving his hat, but indifference to salvation, and habit, and the stubbornness of old age.

"It was time to retire. Cruso offered to give up his bed, but I would not accept, preferring to have Friday spread me a bed of grass on the floor. There I laid myself down, an arm's-length from Cruso (for the hut was small). Last night I had been bound for home; tonight I was a castaway. Long hours I lay awake, unable to believe the change in my fortunes, troubled too by the pain of my blistered hands. Then I fell asleep. I awoke once in the night. The wind had dropped; I could hear the singing of crickets and, far away, the roar of the waves. 'I am safe, I am on an island, all will be well', I whispered to myself, and hugged myself tight, and slept again.

"I WAS WOKEN by the drumming of rain on the roof. It was morning; Friday was crouched before the stove (I have not yet told you of Cruso's stove, which was built very neatly of stone), feeding the fire, blowing it into life. At first I was ashamed that he should see me abed, but then I reminded myself of how free the ladies of Bahia were before their servants, and so felt better. Cruso came in, and we breakfasted well on birds' eggs, while the rain dripped here and there through the roof and hissed on the hot stones. In time the rain ceased and the sun came out, drawing wisps of steam from the earth, and the wind resumed and blew without respite till the next lull and the next rain. Wind, rain, wind, rain: such was the pattern of the days in that place, and had been, for all I knew, since the beginning of time. If one circumstance above all determined me to escape, whatever the cost, it was not the loneliness nor the rudeness of the life, nor the monotony of the diet, but the wind that day after day whistled in my ears and tugged at my hair and blew sand into my eyes, till sometimes I would kneel in a corner of the hut with my head in my arms and moan to myself, on and on, to hear some other sound than the beating of the wind; or later, when I had taken to bathing in the sea, would hold my breath and dip my head under the water merely to know what it was to have silence. Very likely you will say to yourself, in Patagonia the wind blows all year without let, and the Patagonians do not hide their heads, so why does she? But the Patagonians, knowing no home but Patagonia, have no reason to doubt that the wind blows at all seasons without let in all quarters of the globe; whereas I know better.

"Before setting out to perform his island duties,

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Cruso gave me his knife and warned me not to venture from his castle; for the apes, he said, would not be as wary of a woman as they were of him and Friday. I wondered at this: was a woman, to an ape, a different species from a man? Nevertheless, I prudently obeyed, and stayed at home, and rested.

"Save for the knife, all tools on the island were of wood or stone. The spade with which Cruso levelled his terraces (I shall have more to say of the terraces later) was a narrow wooden thing with a crooked handle, carved all of a piece and hardened in the fire. His mattock was a sharp stone lashed to a stick. The bowls we ate and drank from were crude blocks of wood hollowed out by scraping and burning. For there was no clay on the island to mould and bake, and such trees as there were were puny, stunted by the wind, their twisted stems seldom broader than my hand. It seemed a great pity that from the wreck Cruso should have brought away no more than a knife. For had he rescued even the simplest of carpenter's tools, and some spikes and bars and suchlike, he might have fashioned better tools, and with better tools contrived a less laborious life, or even built a boat and escaped to civilisation.

"In the hut there was nothing but the bed, which was made of poles bound together with thongs, crude in workmanship yet sturdy, and in a corner a pile of cured apeskins, that made the hut smell like a tanner's storehouse (in time I grew used to the smell, and missed it after I had put the island behind me: even today when I smell new leather I grow drowsy), and the stove, in which the embers of the last fire were always left banked, for making new fire was tedious work.

"What I chiefly hoped to find was not there. Cruso kept no journal, perhaps because he lacked paper and ink, but more likely, I now believe, because he lacked the inclination to keep one, or if he ever possessed the inclination, had lost it. I searched the poles that supported the roof, and the legs of the bed, but found no carvings, not even notches to indicate that he counted the years of his banishment or the cycles of the moon.

"Later, when I had grown freer with him, I told him of my surprise. 'Suppose', said I, 'that one day we are saved. Would you not regret it that you could not bring back with you some record of your years of shipwreck, so that what you have passed through shall not die from memory? And if we are never saved, but perish one by one, as may happen, would you not wish for a memorial to be left behind, so that the next voyagers to make landfall here, whoever they may be, may read and learn about us, and perhaps shed a tear? For surely, with every day that passes, our memories grow less certain, as even a statue in marble is worn away by rain, till at last we can no longer tell what shape the sculptor's hand gave it. What memories do you even now preserve of the fatal storm, the prayers of your companions, your terror when the waves engulfed you, your gratitude as you were cast up on the shore, your first stumbling explorations, your fear of savage beasts, the discomforts of those first nights (did you not tell me you slept in a tree?)? Is it not possible to manufacture paper and ink and set down what traces remain of these memories, so that they will outlive you; or, failing paper and ink, to burn the story upon wood, or engrave it upon rock? We may lack many things on this island, but certainly time is not one of them.'

"I spoke fervently, I believe, but Cruso was unmoved. 'Nothing is forgotten', said he; and then: 'Nothing I have forgotten is worth the remembering.'

"'You are mistaken!' I cried. 'I do not wish to dispute, but you have forgotten much, and with every day that passes you forget more! There is no shame in forgetting: it is our nature to forget as it is our nature to grow old and pass away. But seen from too remote a vantage, life begins to lose its particularity. All shipwrecks become the same shipwreck, all castaways the same castaway, sunburnt, lonely, clad in the skins of the beasts he has slain. The truth that makes your story yours alone, that sets you apart from the old mariner by the fireside spinning yarns of sea-monsters and mermaids, resides in a thousand touches which today may seem of no importance, such as: When you made your needle (the needle you store in your belt), by what means did you pierce the eye? When you sewed your hat, what did you use for thread? Touches like these will one day persuade your countrymen that it is all true, every word, there was indeed once an island in the middle of the ocean where the wind blew and the gulls cried from the cliffs and a man named Cruso paced about in his apeskin clothes, scanning the horizon for a sail.'

"Cruso's great head of tawny hair and his beard that was never cut glowed in the dying light. He opened and closed his hands, sinewy, rough-skinned hands, toil-hardened.

"'There is the bile of seabirds', I urged. 'There are cuttlefish bones. There are gulls' quills.'

"Cruso raised his head and cast me a look full of defiance. 'I will leave behind my terraces and walls', he said. 'They will be enough. They will be more than enough.' And he fell silent again. As for myself, I wondered who would cross the ocean to see terraces and walls, of which we surely had an abundance at home; but I held my peace.

"WE CONTINUED TO SLEEP in the hut together, he and I, he on his bed, I on the bed of grass Friday laid for me and changed every third day, very thick and comfortable. When the nights grew cold I would draw a cover of skins over me, for all this time I had no more clothes than the petticoat I had come ashore in; but I preferred not to have the skins upon me, for to my nostrils their smell was still very strong.

"Sometimes Cruso kept me awake with the sounds he made in his sleep, chiefly the grinding of his teeth. For so far had his teeth decayed that it had grown a

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habit with him to grind them together constantly, those that were left, to still the ache. Indeed, it was no pretty sight to see him take his food in his unwashed hands and gnaw at it on the left side, where it hurt him less. But Bahia, and the life I had lived there, had taught me not to be dainty.

"I dreamed of the murdered ship's-master. In my dream I saw him floating southward in his puny boat with the oars crossed on his breast and the ugly spike sticking out of his eye. The sea was tossed with huge waves, the wind howled, the rain beat down; yet the boat did not sink, but drifted slowly on toward the province of the iceberg, and would drift there, it seemed to me, caked in ice, till the day of our resurrection. He was a kindly man—let me say so now, lest I forget—who deserved a better end.

"Cruso's warning against the apes made me chary of leaving the encampment. Nevertheless, on the third day of my marooning, after Cruso and Friday had gone off to their labours, I ventured out and searched the descent till I found the path up which Friday had borne me, and followed it down to the shore, watching where I trod, for I still had no shoes. I roamed along the beach awhile, keeping an eye out to sea, though it seemed early yet for rescue to come. I waded in the water, amused by the gay-coloured little fish that stopped to nibble my toes and taste what kind of creature I was. Cruso's island is no bad place to be cast away, I thought, if one must be cast away. Then about noon I climbed the slope and set about collecting firewood, as I had undertaken to do, mightily pleased with my excursion.

"When Cruso returned he knew at once I had been exploring, and burst out in a passion. 'While you live under my roof you will do as I instruct!' he cried, striking his spade into the earth, not even waiting till Friday was out of earshot. But if he thought by angry looks to inspire me to fear and slavish obedience, he soon found he was mistaken. 'I am on your island, Mr Cruso, not by choice but by ill luck', I replied, standing up (and I was nearly as tall as he). 'I am a castaway, not a prisoner. If I had shoes, or if you would give me the means to make shoes, I would not need to steal about like a thief.'

"Later in the day, when my temper had cooled, I asked Cruso's pardon for these tart words, and he seemed to forgive me, though grudgingly. Then I asked again for a needle and gut, to make myself shoes. To which he replied that shoes were not made in a twinkle, like handkerchiefs, that he would himself make me shoes, in due time. Days passed, however, and still I was without shoes.

"I asked Cruso about the apes. When he first arrived, he said, they had roamed all over the island, bold and mischievous. He had killed many, after which the remainder had retreated to the cliffs of what he called the North Bluff. On my walks I sometimes heard their cries and saw them leaping from rock to rock. In size they were between a cat and a fox, grey, with black faces and black paws. I saw no harm in them; but Cruso held them a pest, and he and Friday killed them whenever they could, with clubs, and skinned them, and cured their pelts, and sewed them together to make clothes and blankets and suchlike.

"ONE EVENING, as I was preparing our supper, my hands being full, I turned to Friday and said, 'Bring more wood, Friday.' Friday heard me, I could have sworn, but he did not stir. So I said the word 'Wood' again, indicating the fire; upon which he stood up, but did no more. Then Cruso spoke. 'Firewood, Friday', he said; and Friday went off and fetched wood from the woodpile.

"My first thought was that Friday was like a dog that heeds but one master; yet it was not so. '*Firewood* is the word I have taught him', said Cruso. '*Wood* he does not know.' I found it strange that Friday should not understand that firewood was a kind of wood, as pinewood is a kind of wood, or poplarwood; but I let it pass. Not till after we had eaten, when we were sitting watching the stars, as had grown to be our habit, did I speak again.

"'How many words of English does Friday know?' I asked.

"'As many as he needs', replied Cruso. 'This is not England, we have no need of a great stock of words.'

"'You speak as if language were one of the banes of life, like money or the pox', said I. 'Yet would it not have lightened your solitude had Friday been master of English? You and he might have experienced, all these years, the pleasures of conversation; you might have brought home to him some of the blessings of civilisation and made him a better man. What benefit is there in a life of silence?'

"To this Cruso gave no reply, but instead beckoned Friday nearer. 'Sing, Friday', he said. 'Sing for Mistress Barton.'

"Whereupon Friday raised his face to the stars, closed his eyes, and, obedient to his master, began to hum in a low voice. I listened but could make out no tune. Cruso tapped my knee. 'The voice of man', he said. I failed to understand his meaning; but he raised a finger to his lips to still me. In the dark we listened to Friday's humming.

"At last Friday paused. 'Is Friday an imbecile incapable of speech?' I asked. 'Is that what you mean to tell me?' (For I repeat, I found Friday in all matters a dull fellow.)

"Cruso motioned Friday nearer. 'Open your mouth', he told him, and opened his own. Friday opened his mouth. 'Look', said Cruso. I looked, but saw nothing in the dark save the glint of teeth white as ivory. 'La-la-la', said Cruso, and motioned to Friday to repeat. 'Ha-ha-ha', said Friday from the back of his throat. 'He has no tongue', said Cruso. Gripping Friday by the hair, he brought his face close to mine. 'Do you see?' he said. 'It is too dark', said I. 'La-la-la', said Cruso. 'Ha-ha-ha',

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said Friday. I drew away, and Cruso released Friday's hair. 'He has no tongue', he said. 'That is why he does not speak. They cut out his tongue.'

"I stared in amazement. 'Who cut out his tongue?'

"'The slavers.'

"'The slavers cut out his tongue and sold him into slavery? The slave-hunters of Africa? But surely he was a mere child when they took him. Why would they cut out a child's tongue?'

"Cruso gazed steadily back at me. Though I cannot now swear to it, I believe he was smiling. 'Perhaps the slavers, who are Moors, hold the tongue to be a delicacy', he said. 'Or perhaps they grew weary of listening to Friday's wails of grief, that went on day and night. Perhaps they wanted to prevent him from ever telling his story: who he was, where his home lay, how it came about that he was taken. Perhaps they cut out the tongue of every cannibal they took, as a punishment. How will we ever know the truth?'

"'It is a terrible story', I said. A silence fell. Friday took up our utensils and retired into the darkness. 'Where is the justice in it? First a slave and now a castaway too. Robbed of his childhood and consigned to a life of silence. Was Providence sleeping?'

"'If Providence were to watch over all of us', said Cruso, 'who would be left to pick the cotton and cut the sugar-cane? For the business of the world to prosper, Providence must sometimes wake and sometimes sleep, as lower creatures do.' He saw I shook my head, so went on. 'You think I mock Providence. But perhaps it is the doing of Providence that Friday finds himself on an island under a lenient master, rather than in Brazil, under the planter's lash, or in Africa, where the forests teem with cannibals. Perhaps it is for the best, though we do not see it so, that he should be here, and that I should be here, and now that you should be here.'

"HITHERTO I HAD FOUND Friday a shadowy creature and paid him little more attention than I would have given any house-slave in Brazil. But now I began to look on him—I could not help myself—with the horror we reserve for the mutilated. It was no comfort that his mutilation was secret, closed behind his lips (as some other mutilations are hidden by clothing), that outwardly he was like any Negro. Indeed, it was the very secretness of his loss that caused me to shrink from him. I could not speak, while he was about, without being aware how lively were the movements of the tongue in my own mouth. I saw pictures in my mind of pincers gripping his tongue and a knife slicing into it, as must have happened, and I shuddered. I covertly observed him as he ate, and with distaste heard the tiny coughs he gave now and then to clear his throat, saw how he did his chewing between his front teeth, like a fish. I caught myself flinching when he came near, or holding my breath so as not to have to smell him. Behind his back I wiped the utensils his hands had touched. I was ashamed to behave thus, but for a time was not mistress of my own actions. Sorely I regretted that Cruso had ever told me the story.

"THE NEXT DAY after our conversation, when Cruso returned from his terraces, I was walking about in sandals. But if I expected thanks for the labour I had saved him, I received none. 'A little patience and you would have had better shoes than that', he said. This was very likely true, for the sandals were clumsily made. Yet I could not let his words pass. 'Patience has turned me into a prisoner', I retorted. Whereupon Cruso wheeled about angrily and picked up the skins from which I had cut my shoes and hurled them with all his might over the fence.

"Seeing that he was not to be mollified, I took myself off down the path to the shore, and wandered there till I came to a place where the beach was covered in seaweed that had been washed ashore, and lay rotting, and where clouds of fleas, or sand-fleas, rose at every step. There I paused, my temper cooling. He is bitter, I told myself, and why should he not be? After years of unquestioned and solitary mastery, he sees his realm invaded and has tasks set upon him by a woman. I made a vow to keep a tighter rein on my tongue. Worse fates might have befallen me than to be abandoned on an island ruled over by a countryman with the foresight to swim ashore with a knife at his belt and a slave at his side. I might as easily have been cast away alone on an island infested with lions and snakes, or on an island where rain never fell, or else on the island home of some foreign adventurer gone mad with solitude, naked, bestial, living on raw flesh.

"So I returned in a contrite spirit and went to Cruso and asked his pardon for taking the skins, and gratefully accepted the food Friday had set aside. When I lay down to sleep that night I seemed to feel the earth sway beneath me. I told myself it was a memory of the rocking of the ship coming back unbidden. But it was not so: it was the rocking of the island itself as it floated on the sea. I thought: It is a sign, a sign I am becoming an island-dweller. I am forgetting what it is to live on the mainland. I stretched out my arms and laid my palms on the earth, and, yes, the rocking persisted, the rocking of the island as it sailed through the sea and the night bearing into the future its freight of gulls and sparrows and fleas and apes and castaways, all unconscious now, save me. I fell asleep smiling. I believe it was the first time I smiled since I embarked for the New World."

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Paul Henze

Behind the Ethiopian Famine

Anatomy of a Revolution (III)

The Appeal of Communism

THE CLAIMS OF the Régime and the new Party notwithstanding, it is difficult to find evidence that "Ethiopian socialism" has succeeded in taking root in the country or that more than a small percentage of the population (given an opportunity to choose) would wish to retain it in its present form. Mengistu has not yet even managed to create a stable "New Class" that can operate his Soviet-style state, though the new Party is expected to evolve into such a group. Under such circumstances, the appeal of Communism—and the Soviet relationship, as such—to the dominant leadership group becomes even stronger than it was in 1974, when they originally turned the Revolution in a pro-Moscow direction. Communism justifies the seizure and exercise of power in the name of the People without risking the results of any systematic effort to measure popular desire through elections, or any other form of consultation with either "the broad masses" or even far more narrowly constituted élite groups. It defines open, structured competition for leadership as "treason", and classifies spontaneous debate about government policies as "dangerous" to State interests.

It is not difficult to see why in 1974 some of the more energetic and ambitious military men who formed the Derg very rapidly came to feel uncomfortable about continuing a Western orientation. To feel that it had a firm grip on power, the Derg not only had to dethrone Haile Selassie, a senior world statesman long admired in the West,[1] but a few weeks later summarily executed several dozen senior officials who had worked closely with Western governments for years. But no Western government broke relations or cut off military or economic aid to Ethiopia as a result. So the rapid turn toward the East had to be based on more deep-seated convictions and expectations that Western reactions to the Revolution might be negative. The rapidity with which the Derg was formed, and the fact that no concerted opposition to it developed in the summer of 1974, has been taken as proof that "power simply fell into its lap." This may or may not be true. However, the manner in which the Derg moved systematically to undermine the faltering Imperial régime and render the Emperor and his closest associates impotent implied both a clear-cut goal and political skill in moving toward it.

THOSE WHOSE AMBITIONS—or circumstances—impel them to seize power in a developing country are always reluctant to risk losing it—and jeopardise their own lives—by permitting pluralistic political processes to function. Once the Ethiopian Revolution turned bloody, all Derg members—in whose collective name blood had been shed—found themselves linked in a community of interest, whatever their other differences might have been, in protecting Derg power and their own skins against challengers. No other explanation for the rapidity with which the Derg proclaimed "Ethiopian socialism" is needed—though in reality other factors may have entered in as well.

There was hardly any "proletariat" in Ethiopia. Almost all workers associated with the modern economy were members of CELU, the Ethiopian labour federation. Its leadership had developed habits of independent thinking and was oriented toward the West. With the country barely 10% urban (and more than half of those born in the countryside), the only place where a constituency for a would-be proletarian government could be found was among the peasantry.[2] It is ironic that the effort to create a body of loyal supporters for "Ethiopian socialism" among the rural population involved, of necessity, mobilising a traditionally independent-minded peasantry. The peasants (particularly in the southern half of the country) at first paid little attention to the fact that they

[1] It should be remembered, however, that the monarchy, as such, was not abolished with the deposition of the old Emperor. For internal and external reasons, Crown Prince Asfa Wossen (recuperating in London from a stroke he suffered in January 1973) was proclaimed King of Ethiopia—a lesser title. The monarchy was abolished in March 1975 because of the Crown Prince's failure to return to take up the position of King, it was claimed. How such a role could ever have been reconciled with "Ethiopian socialism" is difficult to imagine.

[2] The new seal adopted by the Derg featured a plow as its central symbol.

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did not *own* the land, could not buy and sell it, and could not hire labour. It was sufficient that they had possession of it; and the extended family patterns prevailing in these regions meant that few lacked labour to till what was allocated to them.

In the first years following the Revolution, the Derg appears to have won strong support from a sizeable body of peasants. The ideological commitment to collectivisation proved so difficult to translate into practice during the Somali invasion (and the ensuing political confusion) that no large-scale collectivising efforts—which would have rapidly turned most peasants into opponents of the Government—occurred. Meanwhile, capitalising on relatively good weather, the peasants increased production. The erosion of peasant support for the Régime, which has accelerated in the south since 1980, has more complex causes. In the north, peasant support for the Derg was always problematic, and was gradually transformed into open hostility.

WHAT OF THE OTHER identifiable groups in Ethiopian society in terms of their orientation toward "Ethiopian socialism" and the Régime's ability to exploit them?

1. STUDENTS count for little politically, even though there has been a steady growth of the student population. University students are now among the quietest and best-behaved elements in Ethiopia. Enthusiasm for the Régime is as hard to detect among them as active opposition to it. The most popular publications in bookstores patronised by students are not the multitudinous translations of Marxism-Leninism and Soviet literature, but books on electronics, computer science, and modern business management. Less ambitious students content themselves with anticipation of a position in the burgeoning governmental bureaucracy.

The more imaginative dream—of "completing studies abroad" and gaining employment in Europe, America, or elsewhere in Africa—drives thousands of students to leave the country by any channel open to them—bribery to obtain a passport, or escape across the border to Djibouti, Kenya, or Sudan. The Derg tries to direct increasing numbers of students to the USSR and Eastern Europe. Most go with little enthusiasm, and few are likely to return as champions of the Communist system. Nor are the Cuban, East German, and Bulgarian instructors at the University and professional schools in Ethiopia notably successful in creating strong supporters for their political system (or even much respect for themselves). The memory of the large group of American and West European instructors who used to predominate in the Ethiopian educational system is still far from extinct.[3] In sum, there is little prospect that Mengistu can ever turn students into a minor pillar of support for his system.

2. WORKERS have not been markedly favoured by the Derg. There has been very little industrial or commercial development. Statistics which demonstrate the expansion of workers in nationalised industries turn out, on examination, to reveal mostly an expansion of bureaucracy.

3. SMALL BUSINESSMEN AND TRADERS account for a much larger share of the population than in pre-Revolutionary times, but the return from their exertions for most of these people is meagre and the opportunity to gain rewards for their enterprise—and expand the scale of their businesses—is severely limited and is subject to drastic reversal when new sectors of economic activity are nationalised. These people are in business because there is no alternative for them. Thousands of Ethiopians make a precarious living operating small-scale hotels, restaurants, bars, and shops, for example. But most medium- and large-scale enterprises in these fields have been nationalised. Private grain trade is still permitted, but only because the government's procurement system cannot function on a scale sufficient to monopolise it. Efforts at expanding tourism as a source of rapid foreign-exchange earnings are concentrated entirely on State-owned hotels and tour-operators. Thousands of small traders in art and handicrafts attempt to earn a marginal living off tourists and visitors. There is an oversupply of traditional handicraft products.

The best that the Derg can expect of the whole class of small entrepreneurs and shopkeepers is that they remain passive opponents and continue to accept, without violent opposition, the increasing restrictions that are placed upon them. If private businessmen still had doubts about the Derg's ultimate intentions toward them, they would have been dispelled by the requirement during the tenth anniversary celebrations that all signs be taken off private shops in the capital—thus reducing colourful commercial areas to socialist drabness. This, no doubt, was thought to be pleasing to the Soviet and Eastern European bigwigs who came to participate in the festivities.

Ethiopian socialism has already created a comparatively large (and steadily expanding) commercial shadow-class of the kind that the economic contradictions of Soviet-style economies always generate: so-called black-marketeers; smugglers; and various kinds of financial manipulators and illegal entrepreneurs. Many operate locally on a small scale; some operate extensive import-export networks with regular links abroad and an obvious need for protective arrangements with the authorities. The temptation for government officials and military officers to become partners in such activities often proves irresistible. Managers of nationalised industries, trading companies, and state farms succumb to opportunities for private gain.

Ethiopia's principal export crop—coffee—is not all

[3] The principal foreign adviser in the Derg's Ministry of Education is an Englishman, who has served in Ethiopia for nearly three decades!

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exported legally. There is a brisk trade in whisky, electronic goods, watches, auto parts, and many kinds of durable and perishable consumer goods. Supplies come over the border from Djibouti, Sudan, and Kenya. (The eastern part of the country, the Diredawa-Harar area, is in many respects a semi-free-trade zone, with only limited central government authority being exercised.) There is diversion from legal import-export channels and from duty-free operations. People engaging in these activities tend to be apolitical, neither strong supporters nor opponents of the Régime. All "socialist" régimes find themselves compelled to accept a certain level of underground economic activity, not only because they are incapable of eliminating it but because it satisfies needs that the regimented economy cannot. Some of these people become, in effect, allies of the régime; others become convenient scapegoats when needed.

4. The Military. Since the Ethiopian government is still in all essentials a military régime, the Ethiopian armed forces—at least the officers—are generally presumed to support it strongly. There are increasingly strong reasons for thinking that this may not be a valid assumption. The Derg provided during its first four years continual evidence of strong personal and ideological differences among officers. Much reduced in size today, the Derg may still harbour different factions. When the armed forces perform poorly in Eritrea, Mengistu has administered harsh personal discipline; officers whose units he considered delinquent he had shot. Such summary punishment must have left a bad taste among many in the armed forces. There is good evidence that military units in Eritrea (and elsewhere in the north) continue to perform much below the expected level of efficiency. The rate of desertion among the rank-and-file in Eritrea has been high, and the recent introduction of universal military service is not likely to improve the situation. There is growing evidence of alienation in the armed forces between officers who endure hardships in Eritrea and the Ogaden, and those who enjoy privileged positions in Addis Ababa, with access to material goods and opportunities for personal enrichment.

It is difficult to judge, however, the extent to which such resentments are politically relevant. More serious may be a growing cleavage between older professional officers with roots in the Imperial period and those who owe their advancement to affecting enthusiasm for Communism. The Russians are said to be pressing for a purge of older officers. The Derg has given a large number of military officers roles in the new Party; many of these have already long held governmental positions. They constitute a special class whose status and prospects for advancement are linked directly to the continuation of the Régime in its present form. Nevertheless, the degree to which these men feel a *personal* loyalty to Mengistu is hard to judge.

5. The Security Services do not conform fully to the standard Soviet-style pattern. The Emperor's two security services were not abolished when the Revolution occurred. The heads of both of them were among those killed (on 23 November 1974), but men immediately below them moved into the top positions and the services suffered no general purges. They continued essentially unchanged until 3 August 1978, when they were merged into a Ministry of State Security under a police colonel, Tesfaye Wolde-Selassie—favoured by the Derg because he did not belong to any faction. While the new Ministry has added new officers, it has not expanded to become a notably independent element in the power structure. It is widely regarded as being superior to, and exercising authority over, the separate Ministry of the Interior, which continues to be concerned with police and local government as it was in the pre-Revolutionary period.

East Germans, Bulgarians, and Hungarians are known to be advising the Ministry of State Security, but their activities are said to be carefully monitored and circumscribed by the Derg. Mengistu has never permitted the Russians or the Cubans to operate independently in the highly sensitive internal security field, nor (unlike many other African leaders) has he entrusted his own personal security to any non-Ethiopian group. The Ministry of State Security certainly constitutes an important element of the bureaucratic structure; but it is not, as far as we know, a direct source of positive *political* support for Mengistu. Many of its officers are motivated primarily by patriotism—a much deeper emotion in Ethiopia than in most African countries. The Ministry is more likely to be the locus of anti-Derg sentiment than a source of blind support for it.

6. The Bureaucracy. The pattern of retention of personnel from the pre-Revolutionary government that prevails in the Security Ministry is characteristic of the entire governmental structure. The Derg has never attempted to carry out a widespread purge of civil servants. Those willing to continue to serve it have been accepted.

In spite of defections, which have continued and recently increased as a "full-fledged" Party is developed, the Derg has had less difficulty maintaining a reasonably efficient governmental bureaucracy than many other African countries. "Brain drain" to Arab countries has deprived Sudan of much of its managerial and administrative manpower. Ethiopia is much better off. Considerable numbers of Imperial civil servants have been released from detention during the past three years and restored to active governmental positions. The central governmental establishment, provincial administrations, and the staffs of nationalised industries and State Farms have grown enormously and continue to expand.

New employees include recent university and high-school graduates. Competition for jobs is keen. In pre-Revolutionary times, most Ethiopian graduates preferred the security and status of government employment to more challenging opportunities in the private sector. This attitude has intensified since the Revolution as the legal private sector has been steadily reduced. Thus it is primarily in the vastly expanded state bureaucracy that the Derg has its most

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extensive group of supporters. Most of these cannot be regarded as enthusiasts for "Ethiopian socialism" but, by and large, they appear to be passively reliable. Among them there is a small body of more ambitious loyalists. The Derg has enlisted these as key members of its new Party. Together with military officers, they constitute the Party's core.

7. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was one of the pillars supporting the pre-Revolutionary system in Ethiopia. It was seldom an active political force; its influence was mostly residual, but it had been important in inspiring national resistance during the Italian occupation. The Derg was very careful in dealing with the Church in 1974 and did not move against the throne until Archbishop Tewoflos, the Patriarch, endorsed the Revolution at the end of August 1974. A forceful personality, he was tolerated for only a year-and-a-half, until early 1976; then he was replaced by a minor Church figure who had been Archbishop of the province of Sidamo, which has few Orthodox Christians.

The Church was deprived of its large land-holdings by the rural and urban land reforms of 1975. It continues to be strongly supported by the population, however; and no one who has spent any time in Ethiopia in recent years can fail to be impressed by the enormous numbers of people of all ages who attend church services both on Sunday and on the numerous feast days in the Ethiopian religious calendar. Pilgrimage sites draw pilgrims in vast numbers. The great annual pilgrimage to Kulubi (near Harar) has been attracting even more pilgrims during the St Gabriel feast which occurs each year during the last week of December than it did in pre-Revolutionary times,[4] and the same is true of the great Muslim pilgrimage site in Bale, the tomb of Sheikh Hussein.

There was a marked tilt toward Islam during the early phase of the Revolution. Islamic holidays were officially placed on a par with Christian ones. The Derg has never had any Muslim members of significance, however, and the proportion of Muslims in prominent positions in revolutionary Ethiopia has remained almost exactly the same as it was before the Revolution. The Derg is perceived by all major groups, including Muslims, as unenthusiastic toward religion; but it is credited with wanting to avoid confrontation. Among both Christians and Muslims a definite post-Revolutionary resurgence of religious belief and activity is observable not only in mass attendance at services and festivals, but in the building and renovation of churches and mosques.

The activities of foreign missionaries have been severely curtailed but not entirely forbidden; their role in education is too valuable to be dispensed with. The Derg's dealings with indigenous religious and missionary groups have varied. It has avoided clashing with the large Catholic minority in Eritrea; on the other hand, the Evangelical Lutheran Mekane Yesus Church (strong among the Oromo of Wollega) has experienced serious difficulties.

[4] Mengistu's wife is said to be religious and has made the Kulubi pilgrimage.

There has been a great deal of reporting abroad about oppression of the small indigenous Ethiopian Jewish sect, the Falashas, but I found it difficult to find concrete evidence that they had been singled out as a special object of mistreatment. Poor, isolated, and long-neglected, they experienced the same hardships as the majority of the population in the north-west province of Gondar, where the Revolutionary Government has never been able to establish complete control. A mass exodus to Sudan developed in 1983-84, and from there, in 1985, "Operation Moses" transported thousands safely to Israel.

While no religious group can be identified as itself constituting a source of active resistance to the Revolutionary Government, it is even harder to find any reason for regarding any religious denomination as potentially supporting the Derg. Since the great majority of Ethiopians participate in religious observances, overtly oppressive actions (in contrast to the present policy of unenthusiastic toleration) could generate active opposition.

The "Ultimate Test" of the Revolution: the Peasantry

Nearly 70 years of the history of Communist régimes in power offers an unbroken record of failure in agricultural policy and communisation of the peasantry. One of the most puzzling aspects of the Ethiopian Revolution is why the Derg has persisted in trying to force Ethiopian agriculture into a Soviet-style mould when throughout the Communist world, most notably in China, drastic departures from dogma are occurring, and even in the Soviet Union some efforts at reform of the agricultural system are again under way. The Soviet agricultural model presents a more serious problem for the Ethiopian revolutionary régime than it has been for most others because (*1*) Such a large proportion of the population is rural; (*2*) There are no promising prospects for industrialisation or diversion of people away from agriculture; (*3*) High population-growth is already placing intense strain on the country's food resources; and (*4*) Beset by chronic famine in some areas, compounded by environmental degradation and spreading insurgency, the Derg cannot risk the consequences of the upheaval that forced collectivisation would cause. It has had to resort to roundabout routes to this goal: resettlement and villagisation.

In the northern provinces, rebellion, insurgency, and various forms of passive resistance to Régime efforts to exercise control of the countryside are severe restraints on agricultural development, and prevent the establishment of procurement and marketing systems. Over-population in relation to the present level of development of agriculture

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almost ensures that, even with periods of good rains, near-famine conditions will continue to prevail indefinitely. Famine Relief programmes—in which the US, Canada, Britain, and several other European countries are now participating—can keep deaths from reaching high levels . . . and, in effect, keep the population increasing. But they have no impact on the basic agricultural and social problems of these regions, which continue to be exacerbated by efforts to quell insurgency and apply socialist dogma.

Even in those northern regions where agricultural productivity exceeds local food needs, peasants are reluctant to sell grain—or increase production for sale—when there are few consumer goods to buy with the money they receive in return. In the centre and south of the country, where production has remained relatively high (it increased during the first years after land reform), this problem is more acute. Peasants themselves are eating well but have little incentive to sell, especially to the state-controlled Agricultural Marketing Corporation. Regulations require collective farms to sell all their produce, and private traders, who still account for approximately 50% of the grain trade, must sell part of what they buy at low fixed prices. A large-scale programme of construction of State-controlled grain storage facilities is under way in the south. Such facilities will make it easier for the government to use coercion to secure grain deliveries.

Proclamations issued in 1978 and 1979 aimed to accelerate movement toward Collective Farming. Though Amharic terms are used for the three stages through which the collective process is supposed to progress—*welba, malba*, and *weland*—and attempts have been made to justify the system as arising out of "Ethiopian traditions" and tailored to fit Ethiopian circumstances, it is basically a scheme for Collectivisation, Soviet-style. It is not surprising that little progress has been made through persuasion. If we can credit the statistics (of 1982), individual peasants were cultivating 94% of the land, State Farms 4%, and Collective Farms and new settlements 2% at that time. There have been only marginal changes since.

Agricultural development evaluation and research are the responsibility not only of the Ministry of Agriculture, but of several other organisations: a Ministry of State Farms; a Ministry of Tea and Coffee; a Settlement Development Authority which is part of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (established to deal with famine relief); the National Revolutionary Development Campaign; the Institute of Development Research at Addis Abba University; and the Central Planning Supreme Council. This last-named group has itself developed a large bureaucracy to deal with agriculture and implement the advice of Soviet and East European specialists. Programmes for provision of better seeds, fertilisers, livestock improvement, and expertise of other kinds all concentrate on the State Farms and on measures that are aimed to entice or pressure peasants into collectives or "new villages".

"We Did Not Know & Did Not Want to Know . . ."

A DEFECTOR who formerly headed Ethiopia's food relief effort says that his Government's policies, as much as drought, were responsible for the catastrophic Ethiopian famine of 1984 and 1985. And these policies threaten to cause continuing starvation in the future.

"We called it a drought problem but it was more of a policy problem," said Dawit Wolde Giorgis, who spoke in a recent interview, his first since leaving Africa on Oct. 25. "Drought only complicated the situation. If there is no change in our policies, there will always be millions of hungry people in Ethiopia."

Mr Dawit, until recently Ethiopia's Commissioner for Relief and Rehabilitation, is the most senior Ethiopian official to defect. He has asked the United States for political asylum. A former Governor of Eritrea and deputy foreign minister, Mr Dawit was also an original member of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers Party of Ethiopia.

DURING MORE THAN *five hours of conversations on Long Island on Friday, and later in telephone conversations, Mr Dawit, a powerful-looking man of military bearing, provided rare glimpses into the workings and climate of Moscow's closest ally in Africa.*

Mr Dawit, who is 43 years old, said that the most damaging of the Government's policies have been economic measures that have discouraged initiative, productivity, and self-sufficiency.

"For the peasant, the question of land is what the revolution was all about. He wanted it taken from the landlords and given to him. But instead of giving them land of their own, we collectivised. . . ."

The bulk of the Government's investment in agriculture continues to be directed to collective and state farms that "have proved to be a failure." Hunger and malnutrition were becoming increasingly widespread in rural areas years before Ethiopia was affected by serious lack of rainfall.

MR DAWIT **asserted that very little of the famine aid donated by the West was actually lost through corruption or diverted to the military. "We can be proud of that", he said.**

Food was routinely redirected, however, for use in the Government's resettlement effort, a continuing programme to move millions of peasants from northern parts of the country afflicted by hunger and civil war to more fertile and stable regions in the south.

Mr Dawit described as exaggerated estimates by some Western relief officials that up to 100,000 Ethiopians had died as a direct result of the resettlement effort. But he said it complicated relief logistics by absorbing such scarce resources as trucks and money. In this and other aspects of the relief effort "there was a clear contradiction between political priorities and humane needs."

WHEN HE LEFT *Ethiopia on a fund-raising tour at the end of October, he fully intended to return. However, he said that in his absence he learned that he was being condemned by "hard-line" members of the leadership as being too sympathetic to Western interests.*

Friends subsequently informed him that his residence in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, had been ransacked by the security police and that it would be dangerous for him to

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The General Planning Supreme Council began drafting a Ten Year Plan in 1980. Never officially adopted, but in piecemeal fashion utilised as a basis for guidelines for policy, it provides a remarkable measure of the extent to which the Derg desires to apply Soviet dogma. This plan envisions $13.4 billion in investment over ten years, only 12.9% going to agricultural. The aim is to increase agricultural production by 60%, while increasing industrial production fourfold, providing new employment for five million people! An annual foreign-aid input of $800 million at 1979 prices is estimated as required to implement this plan. This kind of scheme is so obviously pie-in-the-sky that even the Russians are known to take a dim view of it. A self-serving "Russian memorandum" has been circulating in Addis Ababa in the summer of 1986. It criticises the Derg for "leftist deviations" in economic policy.

The Derg's planning is pathetically unrealistic in face of the continued Soviet failure to provide significant economic aid, and the static or falling levels of development aid from the present principal donors: the EEC, Germany, Italy, and the World Bank. One FAO mission which studied Ethiopian agricultural practices and plans discovered that only 8% of agricultural investment has been going to the small-farming sector. Thus, the capacity of Ethiopian small farmers to produce and sell, even if they were enthusiastic about delivering their produce to the market, is contracting. The best evidence shows that State Farms, in spite of the favoured position they enjoy in investment, offer a poor return and are far from the level of productivity they achieved as private commercial undertakings. They have "serious problems of over-mechanisation, uneconomic use of inputs, heavy manpower demands, and lack of a disciplined labour force. Most are not yet financially viable." Almost no progress has been made in improving Ethiopia's enormous livestock herds—27 million cattle; 41 million sheep and goats; 5 million horses and camels. The potential that these livestock represent for export of meat and dairy products to nearby areas where demand is great—the Middle East and Southeast Asia—is farther from realisation than it was before the Revolution. The situation in respect to coffee, the principal export crop, duplicates the Cuban experience with sugar. Official delivery and export quotas have never been met; falling world prices again deprive the country of a significant portion of the earnings which even a continued modest level of coffee exports might produce. The Republic of Djibouti, which possesses not a single coffee tree, now exports thousands of tons of smuggled coffee.

Addiction to dogma and acceptance of Soviet and East European advice have deprived the Derg of the opportunity to develop and implement serious plans for exploiting the enormous potential which Ethiopia's agricultural endowments represent. Optimists in mid-1986 see hope for change in the slowing up of the resettlement and villagisation campaigns; and the World Bank is reported to be considering new agricultural development loans, conditional on genuine commitment to concessions to the private producer. Pessimists doubt Mengistu's sincerity, and cite the new Soviet-style Constitution and the plan for proclamation of a "People's Republic" on 12 September 1986 as evidence of lack of serious intention to change.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF "Green Revolution" technology and the large body of research that has been carried out in the past 25 years on agricultural development, a pragmatic and foresighted post-Imperial Ethiopian government could not only improve peasant living conditions rapidly and gain peasant support, but capitalise on the wealth created to lay a basis for greatly accelerated modernisation of the country. Ethiopia's range of altitudes, soils, and climates is such that practically everything will grow. The prerequisites are all present for dairy, meat, and poultry production that could not only provide for the needs of a growing population but produce large surpluses for export. So are the requirements for producing raw materials to supply high-quality textile, leather, woodworking, paint, plastics and many other kinds of industry, where relatively low labour costs would put Ethiopia in a good competitive position in world markets. The accelerated modernisation of the country on the basis of agriculture and agro-industry could set an example for the developing world comparable to the achievements of Korea, Malaysia, and Brazil; for Ethiopians have shown themselves to be quick to absorb modern education and training. Their pride and highly developed sense of individualism have enabled them—in exile—to move rapidly into new fields. In the United States (and now, beginning, in Israel), they show

return to Ethiopia. As a result, he said, he quietly resigned from the Government in December. But until now he has repeatedly refused requests for interviews and refrained from criticising the Marxist Government in public.

INSTEAD, MR DAWIT **wrote a series of letters to the Ethiopian leader, Lieut. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, a colleague since the overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974.**

> *"Like many Ethiopians, I was not bold enough to sacrifice myself by speaking out while still in the country. . . . I would, of course, have been executed. The system does not tolerate such political differences."*

He said there was no reaction to his letters until earlier this month when Ethiopia issued a statement accusing him of "betraying the Revolution" and stealing relief money. "This was their response", he said. "It is intended to damage my credibility inside the country and out." Asked about the charges, Mr Dawit said they contained "no truth at all."

KEY MEMBERS OF *the Ethiopian leadership, Mr Dawit said, had opposed revealing to the world the dimensions and details of the famine because they considered it "an embarrassment and a humiliation to the Revolution."*

Some members of the Ethiopian Government, he added, actually "did not know and did not want to know" how serious the situation had become in the countryside.

> **"The leadership lives in a fantasy world created by our own policies and imaginations. We don't realise how much our people are suffering."**

Clifford D. May
in the NEW YORK TIMES

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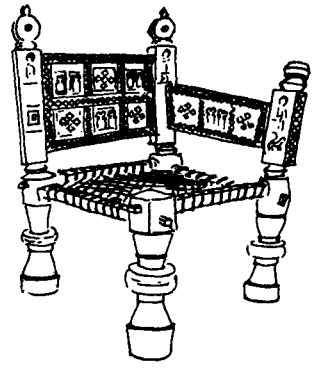
much of the same ambitious eagerness as South-east Asians.

"Ethiopian socialism" is a poor and pitiful formula for using to the full the natural advantages of the country and the strengths of its people. It stifles them. Agriculture, the basis of Ethiopian life for several thousand years, is the wild playground of bureaucrats and dogmatists. The Derg is being driven into the same dead-end policies that Soviet-style leadership always has to adopt: coercion is applied to control output; output declines; exhortation and pressure increase. In the richer and much more highly developed economies of Eastern Europe these approaches have had disastrous consequences—for example, a 25% decline in Poland's GNP in a three-year period. A similar decline in Ethiopia, where famine is already chronic, would be a calamity of extraordinary proportions.

A YEAR OF intensified revolutionary rhetoric and formation of a Soviet-style party—in 1984—appeared to have locked Ethiopia into the Communist pattern for a long period to come. Preoccupied with celebration of its tenth anniversary and proclamation of the Party, the military leadership underestimated and tried to ignore the famine which had been spreading in the north for more than a year. When news of the famine broke soon after the noise of the anniversary celebrations had subsided, the Régime was thrown into crisis. It had no alternative but to accept massive Western emergency food aid. It also had to permit, as a price for aid, a massive influx of relief officials, journalists, US Congressmen, and other American and West European officials. The Derg's efforts to blame the famine exclusively on drought have failed, and criticism of Western governments for alleged slowness in alleviating famine conditions which the Derg refused to acknowledge has backfired: the monstrous dishonesty of Mengistu's régime in suppressing the famine has been exposed by Major Dawit Wolde-Giorgis, the able head of the Relief & Rehabilitation Administration (and former Governor of Eritrea), who defected to the US in October 1985. Soviet inability to provide relief and the continued Kremlin unwillingness to underwrite long-term development programmes have convinced the Ethiopian population that the Soviet economic pattern which the military leadership has been trying to force on to the country offers no hope. Forced "resettlement programmes" are motivated by a desire to remove as much of the agricultural population as possible from rebellious areas, thus undermining guerrilla movements. Western specialists are sceptical of the "cost-effectiveness" of resettlement as a means of dealing with famine. Thus, as 1984 came to an end, Ethiopia was exposed to the world as being in a severe economic crisis which showed all the signs of turning into a major political crisis for the Soviet-oriented Derg leadership. Western humanitarian aid rescued the Régime from the full impact of the crisis.

Can the Derg maintain its pro-Russian policies? How high a price can Moscow pay? Can Mengistu possibly shift orientation toward the West and survive?

How Communist is Ethiopia?



NO PRO-RUSSIAN party or group exists in Ethiopia outside the narrow confines of the Derg and the organisations it has set up to implement "Ethiopian socialism"—the Ethiopian Workers' Party, the National Revolutionary Development Campaign, the Supreme Planning Council—or in the upper hierarchy of a variety of organisations set up to "mobilise" and control various elements in society: Labour, Peasants, Women, Youth, etc. Even among the senior personnel of these organisations, I am sure that the common denominator is bureaucratic loyalty, not revolutionary zeal.

The Revolution has intensified the desire for modernisation in Ethiopia among élites and those obtaining a modern education. It has surely raised expectations among a good proportion of the population. But the cultural habits and preferences of both the modernised segment of the society and those aspiring to join them remain pro-Western. Ethiopian ideological publications read like primers at a Soviet Party school; the effort to adapt Marxism-Leninism to Ethiopian circumstances is all verbal and bureaucratic. There is little evidence that the younger generation has been, or is being, converted—least of all those recruited for study and training in the USSR and Eastern Europe, where they experience the shortcomings and contradictions of Soviet-style society at first hand. They also experience racist prejudice, to which Ethiopians, generally lighter-coloured than other Africans, and with an ancient tradition of political independence, resent intensely.

What, then, has kept a Soviet-style régime in power? Ruthlessness and Soviet arms; tight organisation and ruthlessness among a ruling Junta, all of whom now share responsibility for the system they have imposed on their country; an ability to manipulate some of the symbols of Ethiopian nationalism and to present themselves as defenders of the national interest against hostile forces which have attacked and still threaten the country. Key to the entire structure is the fanaticism and perverse pride of Colonel Mengistu Haile-Mariam who, in effect, functions like a new emperor.[5]

The memory of the commotion which engulfed the country from 1975 onwards, and of the hardships endured during the

[5] A political culture as deep-rooted as that of Ethiopia changes slowly. The Amharic language has honorific pronouns for both the second and third persons, and these are used in speaking to, and of, Mengistu, just as they were with Haile Selassie. Among officials Mengistu's name is seldom used; he is referred to as "The Chairman" or "The Head of State", in a tone of solemnity and with a slight bow, just as Ethiopian Emperors were always termed "His Majesty", and with the speaker often—quite subconsciously, for elaborate etiquette is second nature to Ethiopians—bending his head.

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Somali war and the "Red Terror" remains strong. Ethiopians do not want to undergo another period of terror and bloodshed. In most of the central and southern provinces, this desire to avoid repeating the recent past works in favour of the Revolutionary Government. In the north, where the government's authority is more tenuous, people seem to have withdrawn into themselves and learned to live with insecurity. This is not a new situation for these regions. Until recently there had been widespread expectations among some segments of the population that economic conditions might improve. Most of the peasantry in the centre and south still eat well (by local standards) and their existence still compares favourably with that of pre-Revolutionary times. Unless and until the government tries to force them *en masse* into Collective Farms (or "Villages") they will concentrate their energies on making the best of the possibilities open to them. The absence of a clear alternative to the present régime has worked in its favour.

EVEN THOUGH it has endured for a dozen years now, and though Mengistu Haile-Mariam has proved adept at manoeuvring among his rivals and avoiding assassins' ambushes, the Régime appears brittle. Not only has it failed to inspire enthusiasm or strong positive loyalty, it has not created a self-propelled institutional structure. Mengistu has always feared institutional mechanisms which could make him vulnerable to Soviet-engineered replacement.

I must stress, however, that for all its sycophancy toward Moscow, the Ethiopian Revolutionary Régime is not simply a satellite government. The Soviets not only do not manage it, but must be constantly wary of appearing to manipulate it for fear of generating Ethiopian resentments. No Soviet advisers have been observed at Mengistu's left elbow, though some may lurk behind him in the shadows. There is no evidence that he is dependent on the Russians (much less the Cubans or the East Germans) for his own personal security. Were such to become the case, we would have dramatic evidence of a weakening of his position. Is Mengistu, then, more of a Nationalist than a Communist?

He still appears to see no inherent incompatibility between Nationalism and Communism. A good deal of mythology about the Revolution (and about Mengistu personally turning toward the East because he felt rejected by the West) continues to be purveyed, often by well-meaning interpreters of Ethiopian revolutionary history as well as by rationalisers of the Eastward turn. This is sophistry. Mengistu, openly in charge since February 1977, has continued to praise the Soviet Union, consciously imitate Soviet policies, bask in Soviet praise, and constantly seek Soviet support on all issues of primary importance. On many lesser issues—mostly relating to foreign policy—where it would have been possible to demonstrate independence of the Soviets (Afghanistan, the Caribbean and Central America, and the Olympics, for example), Mengistu has done just the opposite, endorsing Soviet positions at the expense of being seen as a Soviet lackey and clearly out-of-line with many African and Third World countries with whom Ethiopia cultivates good relations.

Domestically, there have been substantial deviations from Soviet practice only in fields where the drastic consequences of applying a Soviet formula are readily apparent, and would

Vignette (I)

CHAT (*Arabic:* **qat;** *scientific name:* **catha edulis**) *is the leaf of a small shrubby tree chewed for its narcotic effect in the Horn of Africa/South Arabian region since time immemorial. The edge of the Ethiopian highlands, along with North Yemen, is the principal growing area. For full effect the new stems and leaves must be chewed fresh; they induce a feeling of euphoria, subdue appetite, and make the user listless and happy. There's a good deal of controversy about the longer-term effects, and there have been numerous attempts to suppress chewing of* **chat** *and traffic in it. The Ethiopian Revolutionary Régime has resorted to unabashed encouragement of the trade as a means of earning foreign exchange.*

THE CHAT MARKET AT AWADE. **Here farmers bring in their *chat* each morning for sale and buyers accumulate enough to fill the requirements for plane shipments to Djibouti and Addis Ababa. The Djibouti plane goes four times a week. EAL does not send its flight from Addis Ababa on those days until they are assured that the *chat* is ready. Today, fortunately, was a Djibouti *chat* day so my flight back to Addis Ababa was on time. The Germans were an hour late yesterday and missed the religious celebration because it was *chat* day.**

Farmers can make 3,000 birr per year from *chat*, they told me—ten times the national per capita income. Good *chat* brings 15 birr per kilo in the Awade market. There were great quantities of it—brought in by both men and women, being sorted and bundled by both. Nothing else except cigarettes and soft drinks was being sold. Wandering through the market were several ragged fellows who I first thought were monks. I learned that they were men whose minds had been blown by *chat*—they no longer had any perception of the meaning of life around them. They hovered around the market, sleeping in sheds at night, picking up *chat* scraps left over from each day's activity. One of them, a tall handsome fellow probably well below 40, came up to stare at me. I photographed him two or three times. He did not seem to realise what was happening.

I WAS STRUCK *by the large number of men sprawled on the streets and by-ways of Harar—according to Ibrahim, some of them were also* **chat** *derelicts—others had simply had too much the night before. I must have seen 50-60 of them in the course of my visit without even going out of my way to spot them. But most of the people at the Awade market were well dressed and looked alert and healthy—there were many colourfully dressed women. Selling* **chat** *continually, they can afford better clothes than most Ethiopians. But what an advertisement for the Revolution, which is supposed to be establishing higher moral standards and eliminating the exploitation of man by man!*

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immediately jeopardise the incomplete hold that Mengistu and the Derg have always had on power: in the premature establishment of a Soviet-style Party, the application of Soviet nationalities policy, or—in a more modified way—the advocacy of atheism and suppression of religion. Agricultural policy *goals* are fully imitative of Soviet practice. The Revolutionary Government's handling of the peasantry reveals a consistent ideological bias and an increasing proclivity to move towards Soviet patterns in the face of mounting evidence of their utter inapplicability to Ethiopian circumstances.

The creation of a Ministry of State Security is more in keeping with Soviet practice than with the previous Ethiopian pattern. Haile Selassie had two established security services competing with each other, as well as several informal informant networks, and applied this principle to many other aspects of governing. Successful Ethiopian rulers in the past have usually shown great skill in balancing disparate forces, setting rival groups against each other, and drawing disparate constituencies into support of the political system. Mengistu has either failed to follow these practices or alienated groups which, with a modicum of political effort, could have been enlisted as supporters of even a republican revolutionary régime (traditional leaders in the countryside, for example). Mengistu's policy toward the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has made it at best a wary, politically passive force which retains a considerable potential for becoming actively hostile to the Régime.

Mengistu has failed to cultivate an intellectual following. He has shown much less skill in coopting young technocrats as Régime supporters than Haile Selassie did. All of these options were open to the revolutionary leadership—because Ethiopians, especially the modernised and modernising segment of society, were not strongly attached to the monarchy as an institution. The adoption of "Ethiopian socialism" and its relatively dogmatic implementation precluded the application of such an approach.

IT WAS OFTEN SAID AT THE TIME that the speed with which "Ethiopian socialism" was implemented, as well as the sweeping nature of some of the measures applied—land reform, for example, or the students' campaign—seemed more "Maoist" than Soviet in spirit. So far as I know, no evidence of significant Chinese Communist input into the Ethiopian revolutionary process, or of sustained Chinese effort to influence it, has ever come to light. In October 1971, when Haile Selassie visited Peking and struck a bargain on diplomatic recognition and on Eritrea, Mao's China—then only beginning the turn toward "pragmatism" in international relations that characterises the country under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping—opted to support the Imperial system in Ethiopia.

China's relationship with the revolutionary leadership has never been close. No Derg members travel to Peking. None of the revisionism in respect to agricultural policies, let alone the economy as a whole, that has characterised China for the better part of the past decade, has yet been evidenced in Ethiopia. Were an officially sanctioned interest in "Chinese ways of doing things" to become apparent, we would have strong evidence of a desire to turn away from the obsequious imitation of the Soviet Union which has so far been the predominant characteristic of Mengistu's exercise of power.

The Military Conundrum

EFFORTS TO REORGANISE the Ethiopian armed forces along Soviet lines do not seem to have advanced very far. Though enormously expanded to eight or ten times the size of Haile Selassie's army, the armed forces still seem to operate according to traditional Ethiopian patterns. It is too early to tell what effect country-wide conscription will have. It cannot be fully implemented for the time being, given the Derg's tenuous control over some of the most heavily populated parts of the country. Furthermore, given Ethiopia's large and steadily growing population, a system of putting all military-age young men through even a token period of military service appears to be beyond the logistic or financial capacity of the government. Military forces at their present level—about 300,000 men under arms at any given time—represent an economic burden that Ethiopia can ill afford on a continuing basis.

The Eritrean rebellion was a major factor in the turn toward blood and violence which the Revolution took at the end of 1974, and it contributed to several subsequent outbreaks of dissension within the Derg. Although on the surface Eritrea seems to have generated little rancour within the Derg in recent years, I find it hard to believe that this apparent calm can persist. The situation is potentially much more serious than it was in 1974 when 25,000 troops were bogged down in an Eritrean counter-insurgency struggle that was insoluble in military terms. Five or six times as much military manpower is now tied up in Eritrea and in the neighbouring provinces of Tigre and Gondar, and a military solution is even less conceivable than it then was. This is the kind of stalemate that almost always produces restiveness among an officer corps and indiscipline in various forms among the rank-and-file.

The most serious problem that the over-militarisation of Ethiopian society causes is the distortion of economic priorities. The fact that Ethiopia has not already faced a major crisis over this issue is attributable to (*a*) the low level of pay and amenities for Ethiopian soldiers; and (*b*) the residual strength of the Ethiopian economy, which after 1974 continued to benefit from the conservative management principles which had evolved under Haile Selassie. The cushion this latter factor has provided is now almost threadbare, and prospects for the indefinite absorption of

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high local military costs without serious political and economic consequences are poor. Military managers are likely to find themselves increasingly at odds with other claimants for available resources. It cannot be assumed that Mengistu and his most loyal Derg supporters will necessarily give absolute priority to military demands. Mengistu's appeals to the military for greater exertions against the Eritrean insurgents have been increasingly couched in traditionally nationalist terms, with historic evocations that go back to Axumite times. In the pre-Revolutionary era the Ethiopian officer corps developed habits of non-conformist thinking, of which Mengistu and the Derg stand as outstanding examples. What is to prevent the present generation—in which, I suspect, the same tendencies toward thinking for themselves must be inherent—from feeling that they have as much right as Mengistu to interpret Ethiopian history freely?

Could the Russian Tie be Severed?

The pro-Communist orientation of the revolutionary leadership—and, in particular, of Mengistu Haile-Mariam—appears to have been strong long before the Russian presence in Ethiopia increased substantially and before Moscow committed itself to a military relationship.

It is hard to believe that the Soviets anticipated the need for such massive and rapid military aid when they committed themselves to provide some in December 1976. In less than a year, they were airlifting unprecedented amounts of military equipment to arm Cubans who were being air- and sea-lifted to the country on a highest-priority basis, increasing their own advisory presence substantially, and ferrying in vast quantities of arms, ammunition, and major military supplies (tanks and aircraft) for the use of the rapidly expanding Ethiopian forces. Whatever limitations the Russians originally placed on their military-aid commitments, they abandoned them rapidly when confronted by the possibility of a collapse of Mengistu's régime in the face of Somali attack. If, before the summer of 1977, they had doubts about Mengistu as their chosen instrument, they quickly abandoned them when given the choice of massive intervention or the loss of Ethiopia. When the Somalis were driven out, the Russians continued heavy deliveries of military material to bolster Ethiopian capabilities against insurgency in Eritrea. The best available estimates are that throughout 1982 the USSR delivered a total of at least $2 billion worth of military assistance to Ethiopia. Perhaps another billion has been delivered since.

Has this military support given the Russians an invincible political hold on Ethiopia? It has certainly brought continued expressions of gratitude from Mengistu and his colleagues, but the widespread popular satisfaction with the Russian rescue operation that existed in 1977-78 has been dissipated. In terms of actual power positions within the country, the provision of military support and the increase of Soviet adviser and Cuban troop presence did not result in the creation of political strong-points within the structure of the Revolutionary Government or in the military. If the Soviet/Cuban intention had been to capitalise on military support by creating a strong, Soviet-loyal Party, Mengistu frustrated it.

Rancour of many kinds developed over Eritrea, where the Cubans refrained from becoming directly involved and Soviet advisory activity was for the most part camouflaged. The result has been widespread Ethiopian suspicion that the Soviets may actually be playing a double game. How prevalent this suspicion is in the Derg itself, and whether Mengistu shares it, we do not know. At the sub-Derg level of the Ethiopian government, I have heard it often. Both Russians and Cubans have become progressively less popular among the Ethiopian public since 1978. Gradually both the Soviet and the Cuban presence were reduced—from a high of perhaps 1,600 and 18,000, respectively, in 1978 to about 1,500 and 3,500 today.

Mengistu's régime does not rest on Cuban or Soviet bayonets. It has so far proved capable of maintaining itself through its own dictatorial methods, and since 1980 has felt strong enough to release many imprisoned opponents (though the total number of political prisoners in Ethiopia remains far higher than it was in pre-Revolutionary times).

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of the Soviet-Ethiopian relationship to understand is the Kremlin's failure to provide economic aid. A few projects chosen for their high visibility could, for at least a few years, have created the impression that Moscow was rewarding Derg loyalty by making a major contribution to the welfare and economic development of the country. The Soviets have been so unforthcoming for so long that even a change in policy and the delivery of substantial aid would no longer have the effect it might have had several years ago. The impression of Soviet niggardliness is now so deeply embedded in the consciousness of the public and of government officials that it could be eradicated only by massive inputs maintained for three or four years. Such generosity appears to be beyond Soviet capabilities in the foreseeable future, as the poor Soviet and Eastern-bloc performance in response to the famine demonstrates. Half-a-billion dollars in commodity and development aid would now seem to be the minimal commitment the USSR would have to make to reverse the economic crisis exposed by the famine.

What, then, ties Ethiopia to the Soviets? Primarily, Mengistu's strong commitment to being a Soviet ally and imitating the Soviet system. Time and again he has expressed himself in the most unequivocal pro-Soviet terms—typified by a speech at Asmara in 1982:

> ". . . we are profoundly convinced that the working class of Ethiopia cannot be free unless imperialism and its

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accomplices are wiped off the face of the globe and the rights and freedoms of the working class of the world are assured. Our struggle is, therefore, international in character."

It is difficult to understand how either Soviet or internal Ethiopian pressure could cause Mengistu to make such statements if they ran contrary to his own convictions.

On the other hand, were Mengistu to decide to break with the Soviet Union, there is no identifiable source of institutional intractability in the government or counter-pressure in Ethiopian society to block such a move. We know too little about relationships within the Derg as it is presently constituted to judge whether ardent Soviet supporters there could be enlisted to keep Mengistu from reducing, or altering, the relationship if he chose to do so. None of the institutions that have been developed to support "Ethiopian socialism" seems to have the capacity in itself to serve as an obstacle or even act as a brake on a process of disengagement. With the public at large, Mengistu might still be able to gain popularity by engineering a successful disengagement. Ethiopian leaders who have defied foreigners have usually been popular. Those who have tried to convert the country to "foreign ways" have seldom survived for long.[6] The 64 dollar question is whether it is too late for Mengistu to reverse course and survive the wrath of the "broad masses" he claims to represent. Ethiopians coming to the West in the summer of 1986 say that Mengistu is now so personally identified with defence of the Soviet relationship, and has surrounded himself by so many men at least as strongly pro-Soviet as himself, while at the same time the mood of the country has become so anti-Soviet, that he is losing the opportunity which until recently still existed to present himself as a true Nationalist and a defender of Ethiopia's fundamental interests. In other words, he is caught in a trap of his own making; he cannot hope to extricate himself from it and still retain power.

[6] The most dramatic example is the Emperor Susenyos. When he succumbed to Portuguese persuasion and intrigue and accepted conversion to Roman Catholicism in the early 17th century, both the aristocracy and the common people joined to depose him.

DISMANTLING a Soviet-type economic system and reorienting military forces dependent on Soviet arms can be a complicated process, as the experience of the post-Nasser Egyptians (and to a lesser degree, the Somalis) has demonstrated. But if the Soviet relationship does not contribute to the Derg's capacity to hold on to power, the incentive for maintaining it is certainly reduced. I am convinced that these conclusions already seem apparent not only to broad segments of the Ethiopian population but to many Régime officials, though there is as yet little evidence that they are recognised by Mengistu or by his Derg supporters.

The celebrations of the Anniversary of the Revolution and the formal establishment of "the Party of Workers and Peasants of Ethiopia" in September 1984 produced a wave of pessimism among Western-oriented Ethiopian officials and intellectuals. They had consistently hoped that confrontation with reality (especially in the economic field), the intractability of problems such as Eritrean insurgency, and

Vignette (II)

WE TURNED into the airport entry road, past the billboard which proclaims: "THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IS INEVITABLE!" There was chaos at the check-in counters. A great mob of people were pressing into the baggage inspection area. Here officious little fellows in uniform were making everyone open suitcases, pawing through them with an air of diffidence and satisfaction that they had inconvenienced everyone, and then finally putting the baggage down for tagging. They would not have discovered a bomb even if a passenger had packed it openly. Their whole purpose was to enjoy the prerogatives of their position—not to accomplish anything useful. The real check-in process, which was in control of Ethiopian Airlines, was simple. . . . The airline simply refuses to be infected by the kind of socialistic idiocy, combined with African *schlamperei*, that now predominates everywhere in Ethiopia.

THE *1984 Eighth International Ethiopian Studies conference had been better than I expected, freer and more enlightening politically.*

One did not get the impression that this society has been successfully laced with informers and spies—that kind of organisation is beyond the capacity of the PMGSE, and even though it may have been directed to undertake such efforts, the Security Ministry seems to have gone about them half-heartedly. The most annoying thing about present-day Ethiopia is the pervasive bureaucracy, the need for **wereketoch**, *the petty security checks, the fearfulness of officials at every level that anything they do may be held against them.*

FROM EARLY TIMES in Ethiopia, *werekets* ("chits") have been requested by officials to protect themselves and keep track of foreigners and their own people. The system was beginning to wane in the final years of the Imperial period when the whole country was open to travel, and modern methods were coming to be appreciated. It has returned with a vengeance under "socialism", where every move that anyone makes—and Ethiopians are much more inconvenienced by the system than foreigners—requires papers to be signed and countersigned many times over. It is always easier to say no than to say yes, to hold things up, to avoid decisions.

Passport stamped, I moved to the coffee counter—a socialist undertaking. No coffee. A cart on the other side of the hand-baggage and personal check barriers was gaily painted with "ETHIOPIAN COFFEE" around its top—but it had only Scotch and gin. Socialism always manages to have a supply of alcohol on hand, but the most basic products of the country cease to be available.

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the worsening of relations with key neighbours such as Sudan might lead to a gradual moderation of Mengistu's pro-Soviet orientation.

This pessimism proved to be shorter-lived than most Ethiopians had anticipated, because the upwelling of concern about the famine and the international relief operations that alleviated its effects produced a contrary effect.

"This famine is a blessing in disguise . . ." I heard over and over again from articulate Ethiopians, many of them serving as officials. "It forces Mengistu to open to the West. . . . It demonstrates the pointlessness of trying to follow a Russian economic mode. . . . It underscores Moscow's unwillingness to do anything to help Ethiopia. . . ."

But by the end of 1985 expectations of Derg policy changes had waned. Mengistu's response to famine was not economic reform, but resettlement and villagisation. These programmes caused almost as much hardship as the famine itself, and thousands of people have again fled over the Sudanese and Somali borders to escape the regimented existence of the new settlements and villages. The hard-line persistence in moving on to set up a "People's Republic" has further dampened hopes of reform.

IN NON-DEMOCRATIC SYSTEMS, changes in governments and leaders, and changes in government policies and fundamental direction, are almost always a function of the feasibility of alternatives. Theoretically, the reorientation of the Ethiopian Revolution toward the West, the reintroduction of democratic forms, and the adoption of pragmatic, free-market economic policies has never disappeared as an alternative to the ultra-pro-Soviet course which the Derg chose. The situation created by the famine—and the relationship of the famine to insurgency throughout the northern part of the country—dramatises the futility of the pro-Soviet course into which the Derg tried to lock the country with the creation of the Ethiopian Workers' Party. The triumphal arches and the brightly painted obelisks and billboards that decorate the streets of the capital look like circus props. On close examination they prove to be built of plywood and tin.

They symbolise the hollowness of the revolutionary vision which the Derg has tried to impose on the country. What can happen politically is still not clear. Where will change come from? The bickering Ethiopian exiled politicians abroad are unlikely to be able to do much; the political game will be played out within the country itself. Removal of Mengistu could cause his whole "Marxist-Imperial" system to unravel. Would the Russians fly in troops to "keep Ethiopia socialist"? Could they afford to? There are not enough Cubans left in Ethiopia to do the job, and those in Angola already have their hands full there. Everybody assumes the military will again play a major role, and hopes that a new group of military rebels will have learned from the mistakes of the Derg. Beneath the surface, Ethiopian society is in ferment. The Derg has lost most of its capacity to intimidate. Ethiopia has never known full political freedom, but it was a richly pluralistic society when the 1974 revolution occurred. People wanted more pluralism and speedier economic development, and they know now that a People's Democracy "can provide neither.

So, to use that favourite Marxist/Leninist metaphor, the locomotive of history is building up steam in Ethiopia. It remains to be seen just how it will escape the control of "The Chairman", who goes on desperately trying to tighten his grip on it—or whether, though fewer and fewer Ethiopians appear to expect it, he might himself actually change the locomotive's direction.

Morning Radio

I knit a way through the traffic,
along Holborn, Cheapside, past the Banks
as Henry Blofeld reports from Faisalabad
on the morning radio.

White sleeves flash in the heat of Lahore
but I am aged eight, at home
lost to the lawn, playing,
at countries, peoples, ages.

A whirr of ball, a strike
and clapping rolls
as leather traps a long arm of wood
in the breeze.

An imperative thud
filters through trees.
The cricketers are out and eskimoed
and the scoreboard sails again.

Deirdre Shanahan

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Christopher Bigsby

For Delmore Schwartz

The slender reach of a despairing arm
Was never enough
For him. The inrush of feeling
Pressed against other nerves
Than those responsive to surrender.

For him, words were a far country,
A distant prospect which impelled him past those
Who watched and trailed a sombre affection across his path
Leaving a glistening film of commitment he found too easy to evade.

The search was on from the moment of his birth,
A sullen diphthong never his destination.
Like a scalpel drawn across the gray flesh of a cadaver,
He cut a bloodless line
Whose slow erupting flesh contained no seed.
He opened wounds but seldom peopled them with gore.

Changeless in inconstancy,
The single note to sound beneath the chatter
Of communion unblessed
Was silent to those whose ears were tuned to something other
Than the anguished cry of self-pity alchemised to art.

He died, not from a surfeit of the real
But from suffocation, a dense compacted crowd
Of conspiring souls
Clotting the arteries
To self-regard.
I'm guilty, he cried.
Punish me. Punish me.

And so they did, in his mind, with a disregard
Which bleached the blood at source
And left him stranded,
Moby Dick on a flat white beach
Or a single bird drawn into the sun—
Delmore, sucked back by the day's eye and the aphasia
His life was squandered to escape.

He never merited the one forgiveness he needed above all,
The only absolution he would recognise.
In dreams begin responsibilities,
In the mind's domain
The quiet grace
Which can never tender peace
Except through reflection

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In the dark pupil of another eye,
The budding iris of the friend whose solace he could only see as
Envy.

All he could do was etch the smallest cipher on the lens,
Inscribe his need, delineate his reckless hope,
So that he would always see the world
Framed by his disdain,
Marked by the passing irony
Of a maker made to unmake the real
And offer us the residue.

John Greening

The Empty Quarter

(*On themes from "Arabian Sands" by Wilfred Thesiger*)

Lionhead, foxpelt, oryx horns,
my old service rifles in their rack,
these tablets, this scotch, and a map

of the *Rub el Khali* ("What is he
talking about? What does he want?"):
the Sands, the Empty Quarter. . . .

Is it enough to remain an Englishman,
no longer The Christian? Or enough
to slouch, replete, and alone,

after a pork lunch, windows
Chubb-bolted against intruders,
their watch-towers, telephones?

Bismillah el Rahman el Rahmin. . . .
Something calls from beyond this flap—
a wolf? The one that killed

two children at their water-hole?
Or my dawn summons: the profane
brass bell of a coffee-mortar?

Like a lighthouse, I tower here, but—
El Nasrani! El Nasrani!—am conspicuously
inferior. These are Moslem, these are Bedu,
the English is an unknown tribe,
or known as the Infidel. My excuses
parch; their Sands drink, drink.

Brick wastes of England. Dunes
that have gutters and aerials. Horizon
strapped to the wrist, our distances

are dates and coloured tubes,
Alum Bay egg-timers,
budgerigar and hamster cages. . . .

"Guide us on the straight path",
our minds are sand, stuffed
against the sun, against moon-raids,

not equipped for the shifting, sinking
one path, which is only camel-dung
(could be camel-dung, could be raiders . . .).

I am alert. ("Better cold and wet
than to wake with a dagger in your ribs.")
But what am I hunting? An extinct,

not mythological, creature—and one
that could survive without this shell,
but only in deserts at the mind's end.

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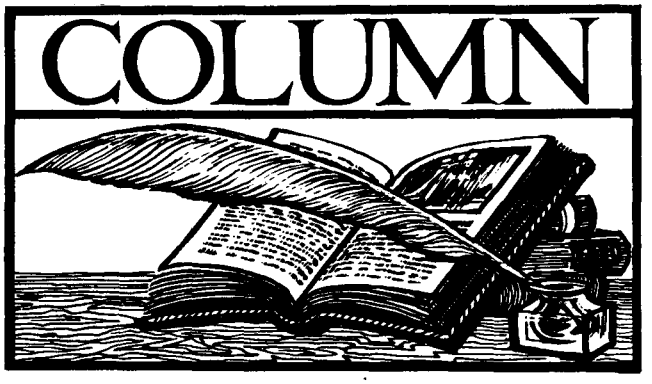

As a child, hearing my mother say "Put down some newspaper" before the chimney-sweep came, I thought she was calling for "no-use paper." Abundant, untidily folded, smudgy with grey print, it seemed the equivalent of household rags or cotton waste—trash that could serve as floor-covering, paintbrush wiper, window polisher, kindling, wrapper for muddy potatoes, or moisture absorbent for wet shoes. How very convenient that supplies were delivered every day.

Some papers, of course, are more no-use than others. Their utility also varies with time. Charles Lamb put it neatly, if partially: "Newspapers always excite curiosity. No one ever lays one down without a feeling of disappointment." Warm off the press, they shine with novelty. Next day, the gloss has turned matt. In a week or a month, there's pathos in their eager twitter about dead doings. But then, gradually, they become historic documents. Reporters' impromptus and copy-takers' mishearings turn into a lapidary record. Yellowing archives and microfilm libraries treasure the trivia of the past.

Journalists, PR people, and politicians treasure them equally on day one, tracking down their own or their rivals' stories, sniffing for prejudice or hostility, purring at implied praise. One Belgian statesman I knew used to wear black gloves for his hour or so with the morning papers—not for the obituaries, but to keep the ink off his hands. It gave the ritual a sacramental air; but, gloved or not, most public men perform it. "Very significant", they'll say: "An excellent piece!" Or, more often: "A gross distortion! We must organise a reply. . . ."

Non-professionals, I suspect, pay far less heed to press editorials. They may not read newspapers from back to front, as some people riffle through magazines: but they treat them as bran-tubs—a dusty medium for the day's lucky dip. As the hard-bitten Corker told William Boot in Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*, "News is what a chap who doesn't care much about anything wants to read." It's hard to overestimate the world's disposable stocks of sheer indifference.

And yet 1986 sees two new daily newspapers launched in Britain, *Today* and *The Independent*. Both, it seems, are aiming at gaps in the market, below the lofty but above the trough. *Today*, just over six months old, reminds me of the late *News Chronicle*: *populariter in modo, serio in re*. Its colour printing has greatly improved, and now looks less like a children's comic; but the appeal of colour is surely limited, especially on newsprint. It looks best in the weather maps, and worst—surprisingly—in sports pictures, to which it imparts a genteel, pastel tone, emphasising irrelevant velleities like the purple shadows on a cricketer's trousers. The writing, too, seems not quite vulgar enough—as if classical musicians were trying to play jazz. Yet, for all that, *Today* has become a good paper, with a wide range of news, a cool tone, and a sensible layout. Echoing *Libération* in France, it makes each page a balanced display, and tends to avoid the fidget of continuing overleaf. To judge from its advertisements, its readers are likely to need loans, friends, cheap flights, rented trucks or cars, paperbacks, polytechnic courses, plant feeders, vegetable pâté, wholemeal bread, muesli, low-fat cheese or milk, and wine vinegar—a list which to me spells Aspiring Student. But I may be wrong. The advertisers also address vehicle-fleet buyers and the smiling-but-vulnerable-couple-with-child so popular with mortgage companies and life-insurance firms. And *Today*'s features seem inclined to *explain* pop groups and punk hair-styles, as if to country cousins or near-senior citizens. Perhaps, after all, the *News Chronicle* readership is still there—still in short-back-and-sides haircuts, tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles, and leather-elbowed sports jackets, or still dressed and styled like the Andrews Sisters; still drinking gin-and-It. and smoking Craven "A"; still wondering whatever happened to Robert Lynd, Richard Winnington and Timothy Shy.

The readers sought by *The Independent* are said to be Yuppies—or, as *Today* might feel bound to add, young and upwardly mobile professional people. At a recent Encounter lunch, two of the paper's founders demurred at the suggestion—as well they might; most Yuppies' instinct is to kick away the ladder they've just climbed. Yesterday, perhaps, they took *Today*; today it's *The Independent*, but tomorrow *Le Monde*.

Nor, it seems, is *The Independent* to be the SDP/Liberal Alliance at prayer. One SDP man had to quit the party to join the paper: political allegiance is out. This sounds refreshing, like iced water in a heated debate—but will it be potent enough? The founders hope that it will. Eclectic and hard-hitting: that's the motto. Given the faults diagnosed in these pages by Herb Greer,[1] there's certainly room for tougher, more responsible reporting. With money and new technology, *The Independent* may be the place for it. We'll see.

Meanwhile, back at the breakfast table, what else might readers be wanting? The launch of a new paper is a chance to air both dreams and grievances. Here, for what they're worth, are some of mine.

I'll start with Necessary Evils, imposed on the press by economics, or by stubborn tastes which not everyone shares. In this case, as everywhere, one man's meat is another man's cruelty to animals.

1. Sport. The acreage of newsprint and forestry spent on spectator sports is truly amazing. I enjoy sailing and swimming; I sometimes watch cricket and football; but the

[1] "The News Managers", Encounter, June 1986, "Who Censors What, Where & When?", Encounter, July/August 1986.

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printed results leave me cold. Are they to satisfy football-pool gamblers, or local pride? And sports-writers' prose is like landladies' furniture—ugly, awkward, pretentious, and second-hand. I presume that millions read it, but I've never understood why.

2. *Stock market prices.* In the financial press, understandable. Elsewhere? Until *The Times* began its "Portfolio" bingo, how many Londoners scanned its City pages? Its Business Section used to be left behind on commuter trains, and perhaps still is. Admittedly, shareholders like to peep at their paper gains or losses; but if they're serious they probably take a specialist paper; and what use is the very partial coverage offered by the popular press? Again a mystery, probably explained by editors' fear of missing a trick.

3. *Crosswords, bridge, chess, etc.* The same no doubt applies to these esoteric adjuncts. Many friends of mine seem to be crossword addicts: some even buy books of the things. Teased for time-wasting, they invariably say they enjoy "pitting their wits" against the compiler—a verb seldom used in other contexts, except to mean making holes in something, such as one's head. Ah, well, I too must plead "A map clue" (anag.) 3, 5.

4. *Recent Appointments.* These are where national newspapers become sudden parodies of the local press. Worthy men and women, totally uninteresting save to their kith, kin, and colleagues, duly get their Andy Warhol super-dose of twenty-four hours' fame—or would if anyone read the wretched chronicle of promotions, sideways moves, and kickings upstairs. It's certainly cheaper than buying one of the many imitations of *Who's Who* in which similar characters figure as "Persons of Distinction", "Pillars of the Establishment", or "Vain Tycoons". So it probably pays the paper to bore the many and flatter the few.

5. *Full-page advertisements.* These have to be very good to catch most readers' attention, especially if they're a double spread. The temptation is to turn past them, perhaps noting subliminally that one brand of fuel puts some animal in your car while another grasses over a despoiled landscape. I hope it helps to sell the product. It certainly pays the printing bills. So let's pass on.

After Necessary evils comes Bugbears—equally subjective, I must add.

1. *Country Supplements.* These, of course, are closely related to advertising and may belong in the Necessary Evil list. But they certainly hit the boredom jackpot. "*Draconia—Where Marx and Marketing Meet*" is the kind of title one dreads, heralding articles on The Draconian Construction Industry, Draconia, the Tourist Demi-paradise, and Draconian Law & Order—all fact and no feel, all statistics and no assessment. With luck, the editor may slip in a brief piece about Draconian television, if there is any: a mere damp handkerchief in a desert of tedium.

2. *Travel Sections.* These, adorned with photographs of beaches supplied by the tourist office, are the near-twin of Country Supplements. The difference is the junket—the

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freebie week in Draconia enjoyed by the travel staff of assorted periodicals, all trying not to report simultaneously. A few timid slurs on the local wine, the beggars, or hotels less expensive than the Dracotour Palace, will salve the free-loaders' conscience without annoying their hosts.

3. Motoring, New Products, etc. Still in or close to freebie territory, these features mute their criticism almost as much. Essentially, they're surveys of goodies recently "released", as people say of films and records, implying crated captivity in some out-of-town warehouse. I'm just as happy to read advertisements if I want to know what's new.

4. In-Depth Investigations. (Is there no pleasing the man?) At the opposite pole from perfunctory consumerism, these purport to tell the story behind the story, under such rubrics as "Probe", "Delve", "Excavate", or "By the Outsize Team." They sometimes live up to their promise; but they're almost always inflated to twice their true proportions, often by repeated boasts about "bizarre events" only now brought to light.

5. Lack of Information. Too often, datelines on stories imply that everyone knows which country has Dracoville for its capital. Filler items, likewise, leave unanswered questions; and too many reports of wars and political conflict take up where the last despatch left off, forgetting how many may have missed it.

6. Moralising Editorials. In France, editorials elucidate: in Britain, they preach. I know which I prefer.

7. Pussyfooting. Although sometimes needed to avoid libel, this usually means fear of offending somebody powerful—notoriously, the print-workers or other unions, the courts (which recently forbade *The Observer* to reprint one of its own stories, about Peter Wright's MI5 allegations), and even the Press Council, with its ban on reporting skin colour as a matter of course.

8. Reviews of Pop Music and TV. The former may be just my prejudice: the latter seems utterly pointless unless there's a repeat. TV *pre*views can be useful; TV reviewing is the nation rubbing its stomach after a meal.

TELEVISION and radio are clearly the thorns in a news editor's flesh. Scooped overnight, beaten again at breakfast-time, he hears his front page anatomised in radio reviews of the morning papers, and must sometimes wonder why people pay to read what they've already been told. The answer is that they don't. They buy the paper for other things—some of them, I suspect, already on my private Request List. Here it is.

1. Bulletin-style news. No editor, I imagine, will abandon the "splash", even if to many readers it's the merest "plip". But a front page which also summarises the main news stories is a boon to busy people; and there's no need to SHOUT news they already know. What *is* needed is—

2. Explanation. TV and radio bulletins often leave listeners only half-informed. A bomb goes off at Crossmaglen; some group of doctrinaire thugs "claims responsibility." How do they do that? How was their password established? Who took the call? What were their voices like? Were they recorded? Could a trace have been made? Naive questions, maybe without answers; but typical of those in listeners' minds. The press might have a crack at them, and others—such as how terrorists secure prime time and even appear on TV.

3. Background Updates. Unless there's "news", some long-running stories go silent. What's happening in Afghanistan? We learn only, at long intervals, that one puppet leader has succeeded another, that there's anger at army inefficiency, or that Soviet troops claim to have killed a dozen rebels. There's a case for continuing stories even when the headlines lack punch.

4. Tricks of the Trade. We all know that "sources close to the Prime Minister" means the Downing Street press secretary; that "ordinary Draconians" means the airport taxi-driver; and that "observers here" means me. What other codes do reporters use? How do they get particular stories? What trade secrets and unprinted tales do they swap in the press club bar? The only book I know which tells one is Edward Behr's *Anyone Here Been Raped and Speaks English?* (1978)—known in the States, for pussyfooting reasons, as *Bearings*. Newspapers could use Behr facts.

5. Scandals. I don't mean sexual shenanigans: there's a surfeit of those. But *Private Eye* regularly uncovers rumoured financial malpractice; the late Lady Rhondda's *Time and Time* used to report bureaucratic idiocies under the single word "WHY?"; and British television's *That's Life* awards them a "Jobsworth" peaked cap ("It's more than my job's worth to make an exception"). Today, the only paper which systematically pillories such twaddle is Basil de Ferranti's *Kangaroo News*, crusading for a real European "common market". Its tales of hassle at the frontier would make zesty reading elsewhere.

6. A Right of Reply. In many newspapers, objectors get short shrift. Even *The Economist*, when it prints letters correcting it, doesn't deign to echo the classic confession, "*Time* erred." Complainants can write to the Press Council: a handful assiduously do. But in France, by law, there's a right of reply. Why not everywhere, by common consent?

7. Reader Services. I'll end with these, although my newspaper reading often starts with them. Best of all is a tax evasion column (as in the *Financial Times*), answering readers' anti-social questions; but no less useful would be notes on other laws which affect the average citizen, from parking to trapping burglars. A lonely hearts' column usually makes good reading; so does a real personal column from which covert trade advertisements are barred. Myself, I'd welcome business features which actually told me which conglomerates make what—do I *have* to buy potato crisps from a tobacco firm? Then, of course, there's the correspondence column—an essential, even if in the early days half of it's written in the office.

Last but one, any serious newspaper ought to carry *full* listings of theatres, cinemas, galleries, and so on—including those which don't bother to advertise. And, finally, there should be at least one joker—although it may be hard to find an ace.

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Gathering of the Warlords

South African Turmoil—By EDWARD PEARCE

THE MISERABLE EPISODE of South Africa and what we are supposed to do about it continues, showing Mrs Thatcher in a bitterly controversial light. She is widely damned for resisting significant sanctions against the Republic and is as little admired by Mr Brian Mulroney, the interim Prime Minister of Canada, as by Mr Kinnock, Leader of the Opposition, and—according to *The Sunday Times*—the Queen of England.

It is all very tiring, and none of it worth the time and emotion expended. For all her faults and limitations, Mrs Thatcher, despite slow footwork, seems to me to have been more reasonable than her opponents. She has taken a longer view of the consequences, and may just conceivably have come closer to the assumptions of the actual, fallible, unelevated British electorate than all the pieties of Sir Shridath Ramphal (Secretary-General of the Commonwealth) bound together and printed on vellum for presentation.

It is fashionable to say, and Mr Kinnock has said it, that itsily and bitsily, behind the curtains and with all due discretion, she doesn't like black people and sees apartheid as a much maligned system of administration. Gathering up every caveat which that authoritarian and peremptory (not to say corner-cutting) lady inspires in me, I don't believe it. What distinguishes Mrs Thatcher from most politicians, apart from her heels-in-the-ground stubbornness, is an ability to read a balance sheet. She will understand better than most people that any sanctions against South Africa run the risk of escalation from the wrist-flipping gesture which makes people feel good into the real trade-denying, naval-blockading McCoy. In which case we the British, heavily involved for excellent reasons with investments of some billions put together over the years, are potentially the huge losers while various easily indignant parties have very little to lose.

Rationally she knows—and so does anyone who has given thought to this issue—that France as a trader and Israel as an intermediary, almost certainly sustained by Italy, parts of the Arab world, and such West African countries as the Ivory Coast, would make possible for South Africa the buying-and-selling of whatever it wished to buy or sell. That will be so because trade is trade, and nobody but a fool passes it up. Indeed, there is a whole school of thought (which is hard to resist) arguing that this is actually a benign process. Trade and business are ultimately liberal agents. The black South African miner is not a rich man but by the standards of black South Africa he is very comfortable, and by the standards of the continent of Africa he has what the heart desires. He eats, dresses and is housed, and his children are educated beyond the dreams of Ghana, Nigeria, Angola, Zaire, Tanzania, or whatever African country you chose to name.

In the absence of trade this would not be so. Ironically, in the absence of trade nothing would have shifted in the flat-earth mental standards of Afrikanerdom. Paul Kruger, for heaven's sake, wasn't a free-trader. The men of 1948 who created out of the conventions and half-laws of hung-over 19th-century racial assumptions their own Vatican of stratification and racial mastery, took a very ambiguous view of the windfall wealth of the Rand and of the English and Jewish entrepreneurs who set it rolling.

The South Africa of Malan and Strijdom has been undermined not by cricket bans or walk-outs from the Commonwealth Games, but by a growth rate which abolished the old, submissive, grateful black. The perception of Alexis de Tocqueville is the neon-lit cliché of the self-evident; poor, oppressed, hopeless men do not threaten revolutions, and the beneficiaries of rising life-standards do. Parenthetically it will be very instructive in ten or fifteen years time to watch developments in countries like Brazil, where race is a relatively subordinate issue but where at present the gap between rich and poor is so vast as to make the people at the bottom extraterrestrial beings to suburban householders. Perhaps Portuguese melancholy and good nature will find a way out, but equally—as hopes grow at the bottom—perhaps not; maybe that country will surprise us with a revolution which runs blood.

SOUTH AFRICA, of course, runs a little blood already. The Black Sash women, mostly white, who wanted to do right on principle have been superseded by the necklace crowds which by filling rubber tires with petrol, putting them round the necks of casually accused submitters to the régime, striking a light, and setting fire have given the term "witch hunt" a new immediacy. To be completely candid, when Mrs Winnie Mandela says, "With our matches and our necklaces we will

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liberate South Africa", I am not much drawn to Mrs Mandela, the Mary Tudor of the townships, and I ponder what sort of liberation it will be that is achieved on heaps of charred bones and burnt flesh after the screaming stops. It won't be a liberal democracy; it won't even be a nice Czechoslovakian people's democracy. It could be a new kind of nastiness we haven't given much thought to yet.

How to obtain for other people in another country over which we have no sovereignty both the cessation of the sjamboks and the prevention of the necklaces is a problem beyond our devising or Mr Mulroney's or Mr Gandhi's. South Africa is not a wonky drain to be fixed by a couple of social-democratic plumbers, it is Purgatory with a running chance of turning into Hell. If Mrs Thatcher responds to so complex and nightmarish a proposition with a measure of considered political agnosticism, who on earth can blame her?

Mrs Thatcher is under fire from fellow Conservatives not on any great point of principle but because they favour the application of a measure of cold cream to the Commonwealth by way of specific sanctions, or the threat of them. It would have been much less dispiriting for Sir Geoffrey Howe on his forlorn errand to have had something to wave, but it would be better not to have undertaken the trip at all. It is not even illogical of the Prime Minister to say both that sanctions will be a futile gesture and that they may do real harm if they work. Probably they *will* be a futile gesture (certainly France will enjoy every particle of dropped trade she gathers into her unchaste apron); but if the whole caravanserai moves onwards, if we get Sir Shridath Ramphal's dreams coming true (blockade, financial sanctions, the works), then re-pression and murder look like getting even bigger parts in the next revival of the show. Sanctions could fail badly and succeed disastrously!

There is at present a liberal buzz, a facile desire to do something to sign up with the angels and against the Pass Laws, the sjamboks, the pre-amnestied South African police. But do what, and to what worked-out useful end? South Africa is built upon the journeys of the *Voortrekkers* and the assumptions of a closed remote community. A sort of South Africa well to the Right of the two Bothas, Mr Viljoen, or Mr Kornhoof could readily emerge. Without overstating the strength of Eugene ter Blanche, he is speaking the authentic kaffir-blasting language of the historic Boer, a farmer incidentally, self-sufficient and indifferent to the degenerate world he sees outside.

There is reason enough already—and Lebanon should have instructed us—to expect the emergence of warlords. The African National Congress is one (the Comrades of the Soweto streets are a warlord army with no visible leader—but Mrs Mandela would do); the Government is another; Chief Buthelezi a fourth; and Mr ter Blanche a fifth. Is this a situation we actually *want* to worsen?

The critics of the British Government seem desperately parochial in their preoccupation with their immediate personal consciences, with doing right and feeling good. Most of the demands put up at the bidding of the busy Sir Shridath ("Sonny") Ramphal tend toward destabilisation when they rise above self-admiring futility. Mrs Thatcher could have made things easy for herself by a few concessions. Perhaps they will be painfully dragged out of her; perhaps the Royal cherry on our Constitutional ice cream will play a political part out of the empty ringing pride which the empty ringing Commonwealth gives Queen Elizabeth. But the actual statesmanship and foresight have been Mrs Thatcher's. Even if she is bullied over the line into contradicting her instincts, she will still have been right initially. This is too vast a problem for progressive ju-ju to rectify. The potential for good, such as it is, still resides with business, with all the trade we can possibly do and even, despite his recent actions in high panic, with Mr P. W. Botha—"*Het Kaapster vremdling*" (the foreigner from the Cape), as the brutal Connie Mulder called him.

Mr Botha and the men immediately around him do not actually rejoice in the State of Emergency, or in the cruelties which flow from it. They are in trouble in large part because they were marginal Fabian reformers in a country bubbling with irrational rage. They should not be despised by us. To amend St Augustine, it is better to evolve than to burn. Ironically, Denis Healey, shot to pieces for it in the House of Commons by Mrs Thatcher, was willing (when he was in the Labour Government as Defence Minister) to sell arms to Balthazar Johannes Vorster, ex-Nazi, Verwoerd's Police Minister, and all-purpose political ugly mug. Mrs Thatcher, who would like still to trade office machinery and soft fruit with the damned foreigner from the Cape, is told very foolishly by Neil Kinnock that perhaps deep down she is a racist.

She is surely right in her assumption that the only people who can liberalise South Africa, by painful and hesitant steps when and as they can next find breath from the Emergency, are the *Verligte*, the half-way sympathetic Afrikaners. Perhaps with the Zulus, another dominant tribe which had just mastered the other Africans when white men came over the Drakensbergs in 1836, they will dominate a future South Africa, possibly letting some welcome parts of it pass into federal autonomy and effective self-government, while holding what they need. If there is a Western line to the Afrikaner leaders, something may be mitigated; in good conditions something may be improved.

If we declare a holy but vicarious war, the mitigating voice will be alienised comprehensively. Having no friends—not even critical ones—South Africa, like Canada and Denis Healey, will do the easy thing. For those two it is a windy but expensive gesture; for the Afrikaners the easy thing will be a retreat into unblinking internal reconquest under a new leadership.

Do the people who gather for conferences, who demand action, who threaten grandly with their absence, ever contemplate the glass upon which we all walk?

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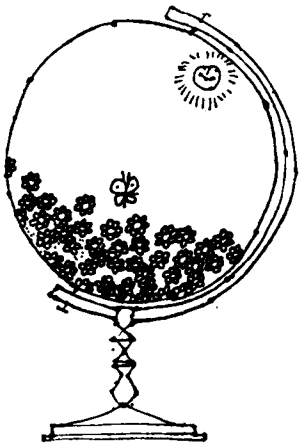
Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

Is Democracy "on the March"?



THE LATEST ESTIMATES put the world population at about 4 billion 816 million. Of these, 1 billion 747 million "live in democratic régimes", 1 billion 121 million in "semi-democratic régimes", and 1 billion 947 million "are prey to régimes where no freedom exists."

This is the balance-sheet drawn up by Freedom House in its annual report on freedom in the world, published in New York. It is a difficult appraisal to make, and involves the application of a long list of fairly subtle criteria, measuring both civil and political liberties, some of which may coexist in the same country with violations of fundamental rights. In the country next door, the pattern may be reversed; hence a graduated scale, with all kinds of intermediate cases.

The overall verdict, and the one that counts, is that for some time freedom has been advancing in the present-day world. In percentages, the figures cited reflect a genuine improvement compared with those of 1973 (when Freedom House published its first report). Today, 36.27% of the human race are living in countries which may properly be described as free (as against 32% in 1973); 23.29% in countries of semi-freedom (as against 21%); while 40.43% are living under totally repressive systems (as against 47% in 1973). Since this year's report went to press just before the fall of the Philippine and Haitian dictatorships, I would reckon that the zone of freedom has now grown larger still.

So there has been progress in the field of human rights, but where has it occurred? The shifts from dictatorship to democracy have all taken place outside the Communist world, with the sole and tiny exception of Grenada (just 100,000 inhabitants) where freedom was restored by an American military intervention and not by any spontaneous evolution. Elsewhere, the big source of new democracies since 1973 has been Western Europe, with the end of the Greek, Portuguese, and Spanish dictatorships; Latin America, where only two non-Communist dictatorships survive (Chile and Paraguay); and the Pacific region, with the elimination of Marcos in the Philippines. By contrast, the zone under Soviet influence has been enlarged in South-east Asia (Viet Nam, Cambodia, Laos) and Central America (Nicaragua, Surinam), and by the addition of several African states.

What a resistance to change is built in to Communist systems! Look at the internecine war that shook South Yemen in January. Ten thousand dead in one week in the town of Aden alone, which suggests at least twice that number in the whole country, with its barely 2 million inhabitants. And all this carnage merely in order to replace one pro-Soviet faction with another. The totalitarian calm quickly descended once again, and the media soon stopped mentioning the event. Contrast that with the national and international repercussions of such a bloodbath had it happened in Tunisia, or in South Korea!

So it is in the capitalist or the capitalist-influenced world that the transitions and returns to democracy have been happening. Furthermore, the United States has moved steadily towards making a doctrine of the active protection of those political trends which work to compel dictators to choose between free elections or hurried farewells. In March, President Reagan declared in a message to Congress that his Administration intended to oppose the dictatorships of the anti-Communist Right just as strongly as those of the pro-Soviet Left. "The American people", he added, "believe in human rights and will fight tyranny in all its forms, on the Right as well as on the Left. . . ."

On 12 March, in Geneva, the US asked the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to condemn the Chilean government of Augusto Pinochet for its persistent violations of human rights. The American delegate stated that his country was making its first explicit request for such an international condemnation because the Chilean government had not responded with reforms to its policy of "silent diplomacy". At the same time the State Department hardened its policy of "constructive engagement" towards South Africa by declaring its unreserved support for "majority rule" in that country: in other words it was calling for elections with universal suffrage and total electoral equality between Blacks and Whites. . . .

SINCE THOSE EARLY post-War years when the "Free World" defined itself by its opposition to the totalitarian world, the democracies have been locked into a predicament of their own making. In order to have the right, in the name of freedom, to contain the Soviet Union and to resist the proliferation of régimes on the "Soviet model", they were bound to rely only on those governments that respected the basic freedoms, and not to support any that did not. This was both a moral and a practical question. By what right could they fight against totalitarian expansion and argue for their own cause, if they tolerated or even favoured dictatorial régimes in their own zone?

Greatly to our shame, history will record that this *contrat démocratique* was far from being generally observed; and this contradiction was thoroughly exploited by the other side and by Left-wing oppositions in the democracies, so that the free world lost many ideological battles. How could it have won them, in face of so untenable an obligation, and one which no civilisation in history had ever assumed? How could it

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possibly observe an obligation which forbade it to be allied—even in defence of its most urgent interests, its civil liberties and its national security—with any states other than those which were democratic, virtuous, and humane?

IT IS NOT ALWAYS up to the West to implant democracy in places where long traditions have constituted other forms of authority. If it tried to do so it would be accused of interference, of "interventionism", and of contempt for other countries' customs. In any case such a project would often be impossible to achieve in the short term. Is France to be asked to democratise Chad before helping it to resist the Libyan invasion? Such a requirement would amount to making a present to Gaddafi, and his backers, of the African countries not yet under their dominion. Ought we to break off all economic and strategic links with Saudi Arabia as long as it fails to adopt our own political system, our own penal code, and our own conception of the rights of man (and woman)?

What is to be done about the authoritarian régimes which are equipped with a modern police-and-military state—countries like South Korea, and Turkey (which gained, then lost, and is now recovering democracy)? These two countries constitute essential bulwarks of Western military security. To expel Turkey from NATO, or withdraw American troops from South Korea (as President Carter envisaged doing) would mean handing them over to the USSR and to North Korea, respectively. The defence and security of the "Free World" would suffer an irreparable blow; and it is hard to imagine what the Turkish and Korean peoples would gain, or to see any outcome but the permanent closure of a route to

A Bulgarian Atrocity . . . Purging an Ethnic Minority

AMNESTY International's recent report on the forcible Bulgarisation of ethnic Turks and Bulgarian Mohammedans reveals fresh details of one of the most shameful actions to be put in train, at a time of peace, in the name of liberty and progress in 20th-century Europe.

The report confirms facts that until now took the character of rumours because Bulgarian authorities denied foreign visitors information about Turkish ethnic areas and the right to travel to them. Entitled "Bulgaria—Imprisonment of Ethnic Turks", the document details how, in late 1984, Bulgarian authorities secretly initiated a countrywide campaign to change the names of all ethnic Turks and Bulgarian Mohammedans.

THE WEARING OF *traditional Turkish trousers was forbidden. So was the speaking of Turkish in the street, public places, schools and institutions. Bulgarian authorities stated that the ethnic Turks were in fact descendants of "Slav Bulgarians" who had been forcibly converted to Islam under Ottoman rule. They argued that these "Slav Bulgarians" were voluntarily requesting Bulgarian names as a "sign of their rebirth in the Bulgarian nation."*

In fact, the "reconstruction of Bulgarian names" was done under duress. In the winter and spring of 1984-85 villages with predominantly Turkish inhabitants were surrounded by police with dogs, and troops with tanks, often in the early hours of the morning. Officials with new identity cards visited every household, and the Turks were forced, in many cases at gunpoint, to accept the cards and sign forms requesting new Bulgarian names.

Many of those who resisted were arrested and detained. More than 100, but (according to Turkish sources) possibly as many as 1,000, ethnic Turks were killed during the implementation of the campaign. Others, including children, were banished from one area to another. The Turkish parts of the country were sealed off. The Bulgarian authorities denied any knowledge of the campaign or indeed of the existence of Turks on Bulgarian soil.

THERE IS NO **convincing explanation why the Bulgarian Communists chose to add yet another black mark to their well-tarnished international reputation. Some say they wanted to homogenise the population before the next census, fearing that the disproportionately high birthrate of the Moslems would jeopardise the claim of Bulgarians to be a predominantly one-nation state. Others say that they feared Islamic fundamentalism and the disruptive effect this might have on "socialism." We need probably not look beyond Balkan bloody-mindedness for an explanation—a kind of latter-day "national socialism" in which the nationalism was genuine, but the "socialism" was contrived and imported.**

The nice question is whether the Bulgarian government had Moscow's authority for undertaking this piece of compulsory assimilation. For four decades, Bulgaria has been Moscow's most loyal satellite. Nothing in the régime's record betrays an independent will or much independent initiative. The Soviet ambassador sits in on meetings of the Bulgarian cabinet. Officers of the Bulgarian armed forces and of the security services are Soviet-trained and effectively under Soviet control. The Soviet leaders and their emissaries regard themselves as mentors of the Bulgarian apparat and keepers of Bulgarian rectitude, and are so perceived by the Bulgarian élite.

AND YET, *the brutal Bulgarisation of the ethnic Turks and Bulgarian Mohammedans does not quite fit Soviet interests. Nor does it fit Soviet nationalities policy, past or present. True, under revolutionary and wartime conditions, Soviet history has seen some egregious crimes committed, in the name of liberty, against smaller nations under Russian tutelage. The wholesale deportation, during the war, of the Crimean Tatars, the Chechens and the Volga Germans are three well-remembered examples. Lenin's warning about the arrogance of "Great Russian chauvinism" has been respected more in the breach than in the observance. In other words, Soviet history doesn't make it philosophically impossible to imagine that Sofia had informed Moscow of the planned "Gleichschaltung" of its Turks and obtained its clear or tacit support.*

But had it? Those who think it had argue with some

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democracy. This route is far from being blocked at the moment, and in both countries there are indications of its being opened or restored. In Pakistan and Bangladesh too, the democratic transformation is under way. As Jimmy Carter's failure in Iran has shown, trying to hustle a dictatorship into democracy may spring from fine intentions, but it often paves the way for a still worse oppression.

Thus the task of the "Free World" in simply surviving, without putting itself in the wrong with every other step it takes, is incomparably more difficult than the task of the Communist world. By definition, it would be ludicrous to ask the Communist bloc to "democratise" itself and its allies so as to earn the right to defend itself, or to move against others.

More than that, the countries of totalitarian socialism have no qualms about establishing excellent relations with those of Right-wing dictatorship. They feel no guilt on this account, and none of the vituperation which such shady opportunistic liaisons incur for the democracies.

Remember how sadly Moscow responded to the departure of Ferdinand Marcos, whom a straight-faced *Tass* correspondent described as "the one man capable of stabilising the country's situation without depending on American aid." *Pravda* proclaimed (21 February) that "considerations about the defence of democracy, the fight against corruption, and so on, are merely the camouflage for Washington's aims." As far back as 1972, the Philippine Communist Party was stigmatising "politicians in the pay of the CIA, like Senator Benigno Aquino." The world is less simple than it sometimes appears. . . . I cannot go into all the details of the honeymoon between Moscow and Manila, except to recall that the two capitals were "twinned" in 1984, that Mme Marcos was then decorated by the USSR for "her

plausibility that the forcible Bulgarisation of the Turks was a symbolic warning to restive Moslems within the Soviet Union itself. It was, they say, a shot across the bow of Moslem fundamentalism. No Khomeinis or Gaddafis would be tolerated within the communist empire. But this argument lacks persuasion.

MOSLEM FUNDAMENTALISM, **to the extent it exists, is well under control in Central Asia and elsewhere in the Soviet Union. The Soviet interest under current international conditions is not to discourage it but ride it. The Bulgarian atrocities will have, and indeed have already had, a highly negative echo among Moslems throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Those who have Soviet-style régimes, or are toying with the idea of having one, will certainly have reason to think again, seeing that the Soviet system is capable of gross racism and cultural aggression even in peacetime.**

IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN *Moscow's purpose to alienate so many hotheaded but useful allies. The Bulgarians appear to have undercut Soviet propaganda at a most sensitive spot and at a most awkward time. But there is also a broader reason why the Bulgars seem to have gratuitously damaged the image of the Soviet empire. The Soviet leaders are fervent advocates of "national liberation" struggles throughout the Third World. Their pledges of support to Third World countries will sound more hollow now that the Bulgarian Communists have behaved with the same arrogance and brutality Communist leaders have so often criticised as the special attitudes of the white master races vis-à-vis indigenous civilisations under "imperialism."*

The shots that killed hundreds of Turkish Bulgarians in the spring of 1985 because they refused to surrender their names, their faith, and civilisation to socialism will reverberate around the Third World long after the present Bulgarian leadership has gone. The Bulgars have done the damage—but Russians will live with the consequences.

IF THE BULGARIAN COMMUNISTS **acted at Soviet behest or with Soviet connivance, it is time the Soviets were shown up for their cynicism and the Bulgarians for their violation of the universal declaration of human rights, the Helsinki Accords, the charter of the United Nations and indeed the Bulgarian peace treaty and constitution. Both should be hauled before the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe group currently meeting in Bern. The hypocrisy of Soviet Third-World propaganda should be exposed. The Turkish government is preparing to do just that. We should support them.**

Certainly, at the UN, the Soviet government came to the defence of the Bulgarian campaign. Speaking at the UN Committee on Racial Discrimination in March, Gleb Starushenko, the Soviet delegate, said that racial discrimination did not exist in Bulgaria where "all are treated in the same way." He argued that there was "no particular need" for Bulgarians of Turkish origin to remember the language and customs of their forefathers. He agreed that there was a Moslem—not an ethnic—minority in Bulgaria, but he contended that the religious rights of that minority were well respected. Whether this ex post facto apologia for an ally in trouble implies Soviet approval as a conscious piece of policy remains to be seen.

BUT IF THE BULGARIANS ACTED *without the approval of the Soviet authorities, then it is time Mr Gorbachev dissociated himself from his recalcitrant Balkan clients and cleaned the Augean stables in Sofia. Going by the books, he would have perfectly legitimate grounds for doing so. Soon after the Bolshevik Revolution Lenin signed an appeal which Mr Gorbachev would have as much reason publicly to embrace today as he would have to disown Mr Zhivkov and his unlovable entourage:*

> **"Moslems of Russia, Tatars of the Volga and the Crimea, Kirghiz and Sarts of Siberia and Turkestan, Turks and Tatars of Trans-Caucasia, Chechens and mountain Cossacks. All you, whose mosques and shrines have been destroyed, whose faith and customs have been violated by the czars and oppressors of Russia. Henceforward your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions are declared free and inviolable. Build your national life freely and without hindrance. It is your right. Know that your right, like those of all the peoples of Russia, will be protected by the might of the revolution."**

Mr Gorbachev could—tongue in cheek—cogently claim that **that** *is the true voice of the Soviet system and rid himself of an embarrassing servitor. The question is whether Mr Gorbachev's writ runs unhindered in Eastern Europe or indeed in the Soviet Union.*

George Urban

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contribution to cultural exchanges and to the cause of Soviet-Philippine friendship", and that in 1985 Marcos's well-tailored jacket was decorated with the Jubilee Medal of the Presidium of the USSR.

Still rising above any pointless prejudice, Moscow recently sent to Teheran its Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Georgi Kornienko, who expressed his joy about a "fruitful" visit punctuated by "complete and constructive" talks, and handed out invitations to every mullah fit for foreign travel. Fraternising with bloody tyrannies is shameful only for democracies.

FORTUNATELY, IT IS ALSO less and less necessary for them. History is in the throes of refuting a thesis once prevalent on the Left, according to which the democracies of Europe and North America could only preserve their own systems of liberty at home by reliance abroad on an external mosaic of fascist states. According to this line, their prosperity, which was the condition of their freedom, presupposed the economic exploitation of pseudo-independent countries. And the pursuit of this economic exploitation required the preservation by force of authoritarian régimes.

We know today that these two explanations are false. *Les faits ont parlé*. The principal cause of the poor countries' underdevelopment is not their exploitation by the rich countries. And it is neither necessary nor advantageous for the democracies to back despotic régimes in the rest of the world. On the contrary, development and democratisation go together in the long term; and this convergence in other countries does nothing but good for the already developed democracies. Today the pressure for democracy comes as much from the affluent world of the haves as from the world of the have-nots. This practical lesson ought surely to have the effect of revising Western thinking about "North-South" relations from top to bottom.

The Battle for the Cities

London Letter—By ROBERT SKIDELSKY

HAROLD WILSON once remarked that anyone who spoke on local government without having to, needed his head examined. Now that the Greater London Council (and the six Metropolitan County Councils) have finally been abolished, it seems a good moment to take the risk of being declared mentally incompetent and ask what the battle was all about.

Academic literature on local government does not give us much of a clue. Two themes have dominated it.

The first has to do with the size of the units in which various local government services should be provided. It was widely held that only "large units" could provide efficient major services and adequate planning and coordination for urban-industrial complexes. It was mainly for these reasons that the seven metropolitan "governments" were devised—the Greater London Council between 1962-64 and the six others in 1971-72—both by Conservative governments, and both at a time when "big" was still thought to be "beautiful".

The other main issue has to do with centralism versus localism. The increasing financial power of central government, which provided over half of local authority income, was seen as strangling "local democracy". The favourite remedy of the "localists" was to give local authorities the power to levy a local income tax, either to supplement or to replace the rates on property. Whitehall always rejected this on the ground that it would interfere with the government's ability to manage the economy. The centralist-localist argument has a long history. As Howard Elcock put it in a standard text, "the existence of local authorities with some degree of autonomy has long been regarded as a bulwark protecting the liberties of the British citizen against excessive central power. . . ."

This time-hallowed way of talking about local government reform has been followed both by Mrs Thatcher's government and by its opponents. Thus, in its White Paper *Streamlining the Cities* (October 1983) the Government claimed that there was no practical role for the metropolitan authorities which had been set up. Most of their functions could be readily devolved to lower-tier authorities, with considerable saving of money. Opponents tended to see this government's interventions in local authority business (which include establishing the right to buy council houses and "rate-capping") as part of some sinister trend towards centralisation, leading to the extinction of local autonomy and, therefore, the power of intermediate authorities to "protect citizens against the state." But the Government too is claiming to be in the "protection" business—only in its eyes the tyrants are local, not national.

SUCH LANGUAGE DOES NOT really capture the essence of what has been happening. The conflict between Mrs Thatcher's government and *some* local authorities has plainly been ideological. The seven abolished Metropolitan Councils, together with some well-known "inner city" authorities (Camden, Islington, Lambeth in London; Sheffield; Liverpool; etc.) were trying to use their powers to build up

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the power of the militant Left locally—building socialism in one county ("The People's Republic of Islington", as it was known)—at the precise moment that Mrs Thatcher was trying to eliminate it nationally. Mrs Thatcher saw that her own "revolution" could not succeed unless the municipal power of socialism were broken. And the Labour Left concluded that, in the circumstances, the "fight against Thatcherism" could be more effective at the municipal than at the parliamentary level.

It is surprising, in retrospect, that ideological conflict between the two levels of government has been so long in coming. The 19th-century "growth of the state" started, after all, at the municipal level, with powers expressly delegated by the Westminster central government. In other words, the task of dealing with the social problems created by urbanisation and industrialisation—the very problems which gave rise to the socialist movement—was handed over to the local authorities. Late 19th-century socialists thus tended to see the socialist advance in terms of the capture of *municipal* power. It was argued that Parliament, which remained in the hands of the "bourgeois parties", could be bypassed through the use of the very powers which Parliament had granted local government. Such a strategy seemed to be rendered superfluous by the growth of the Labour Party in Parliament. With the exception of George Lansbury's "Poplarism"—the attempt by local councillors at Poplar early this century to extend the relief of poverty beyond the limits laid down by the government—local Labour authorities refrained from challenging the policies of central governments (which were expected to be increasingly those of Labour governments). The great expansion of local-authority spending and municipal employment in the 1960s and 1970s was mainly at the behest of, certainly with the approval of, the Wilson governments. Besides this, the middle ground of post-War British politics was dominated by the belief that public spending was good. (Prime Minister Edward Heath was one of the biggest post-War spenders.) So there was no occasion for major conflict between the two levels, whichever party was in power nationally.

With Mrs Thatcher's victory in 1979, all this changed (though, to be fair, a Labour Cabinet Minister, Anthony Crosland, had warned local councillors that "the party is over" as early as 1975). Mrs Thatcher believes that the elimination of inflation as well as the reversal of Britain's economic decline requires a permanent shrinkage of the state—the state should spend less, borrow less, employ less. Since local-authority spending accounted for almost 40% of total public spending, and local authority employment for over half of total public employment (excluding the nationalised industries), her determination to bring about this shrinkage was bound to bring her government into conflict with high-spending local authorities. Moreover, the attempt by central government to reduce the "size" of the state coincided with an increased local (as well as national) demand for its services as the economy went into depression, partly as a result of the Government's disinflationary policies.

By 1983 a contradictory shift had taken place in the balance of political power. Mrs Thatcher won a second term of office with a greatly increased Parliamentary majority; but local power had swung equally decisively towards the Labour Party. In 1981 Labour had captured all seven of the Metropolitan councils, including the GLC (the Greater London Council) and many crucial "inner city" councils. "The new councillors", wrote Andrew Forrester, Stewart Lansley, and Robin Pauley, in their book, *Beyond our Ken: A Guide to the Battle for London*:

> "were unprepared to cut services without a fight. But the ideological divide goes much deeper than the conflict over spending levels. The new Left has a different vision of the role of local councils. As well as protecting services and resisting privatisation, it has set out to exploit what it views as the socialist potential of local government. This has included developing new socialist initiatives, and attempting to win popular support and build alliances round those initiatives. . . ."

Through its much-publicised policies of "cheap fares", employment-creation through a Greater London Enterprise Board, "Arts for the People", and support for minority groups, as well as its anti-Government stands on both Northern Ireland (and the IRA) and nuclear weapons, Ken Livingstone's Greater London Council was able to project the socialist alternative to Thatcherite Conservatism far more dramatically than could the Labour Party in Parliament. It is well known that it was at Mrs Thatcher's personal insistence that the pledge to abolish the GLC and Metropolitan county councils was inserted into the Conservative Manifesto of 1983.

What the struggle was about, therefore, had little to do with the traditional issues of Central and Local Government. It was one aspect of the conflict between the Thatcherites and their opponents about the role of the state in solving economic and social problems. Mrs Thatcher was determined to dethrone what Professor Richard Rose has called the "hyperthyroid" state of the post-War consensus in order to release energies and resources for private wealth-creation. This meant bringing to heel and, if necessary, abolishing those layers of the state which not only opposed the policy, but had the power and the will to sabotage it. But this was incidental to the purpose of redefining the relationship between the public and private sectors.

In the short run, Mrs Thatcher has succeeded. The Left-wing attempt to use local power militantly to implement socialist alternatives to national policy has failed. The legislative and financial power of elected national government was too great to permit the construction of "socialist enclaves" in Thatcherite Britain. More fundamentally, social forces were on the Government's side. The coalition of urban "under-classes" which the Labour Left relied on was not strong, if in places numerous, enough to thwart the Government's purpose. But Mrs Thatcher has paid a heavy political price for her victory; and it could cost her a third term.

The clear lesson of the struggle is that the battle for Britain's future will be fought out at Westminster, not in the Town Halls.

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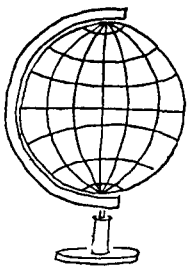
Régis Debray's Choice of Enemies

By Alain Besançon

Paris



RÉGIS DEBRAY, adviser to President Mitterrand, has been propounding his view of the USSR in a recent book, *Les Empires contre l'Europe*, and in interviews. The questions raised are so important that we have to overlook Debray's tone—peremptory to the point of arrogance—nor do we expect from him any kind of expert's competence (which he would certainly disclaim). Still, the main argument deserves to be examined, and he expounds it with considerable power and eloquence. In simple terms, it runs as follows: that the Soviet world can be seen in two ways, as an Ideological Movement and as a State.

As a movement it has stopped being worldwide because it is split:

> "The Marxist universe cannot diversify without growing more fragile. The centrifuge of national interests obliges it to choose between conquest and rupture. The Communist system is no longer a world but a crisis in expansion. . . ."

This movement has also lost its hold on human belief:

> "It is precisely because the Communist world aligns itself with an ideocracy as its centre (Moscow) and source ('October') that the fall of the idea strikes at the heart of the movement. . . . The dissociation of strength from idea cuts off Big Brother's arms and legs."

As a State, the USSR is declining. The logistical base of its military power (the economy, the technology) is shrinking:

> "We grasp the power of the Soviet Union by means of an obsolete definition of power. We are now witnessing a mutation in the parameters of power which are shifting it towards the capacity to handle, store and distribute information, which makes the USSR a country that not only lacks the Third Industrial Revolution but is more and more reverting towards being the continental, conservative power of the 19th century, devoid of the means required by a 20th-century superpower in order to carry out a genuine world policy. The Soviet world is a relic. . . ."

In my view, these statements are not mistaken; but they do need to be placed within a broader framework, and especially within a sounder formulation of the general problem.

It is, I think, quite premature to diagnose the death of that ideology. It is still alive and well in the Third World. The first Castroism, that of Che Guevara *and* Régis Debray, has failed; but the second, Managua's, has succeeded . . . thanks to the more or less conscious conversion of part of the Roman Catholic clergy. Leninist ideas are even gaining militant ground on the Left in Britain and in the United States, and they infuse the "theologies of liberation". To be sure, they are in decline on the *rive gauche* of the Seine, but Régis Debray must remember how recently they gave rise to the deepest devotion. Today they are prospering among the European *petite intelligentsia*, and they actuate the terrorist underworld. The movement's fragmentation does not signify its extinction, and the very logic of its idea clearly creates a centripetal force oriented towards Moscow. It is true enough to say that in the USSR, as in every Communist country, the ideology (for quite some time now) is no longer an object of belief. But that does not prevent it from being effective, possibly more effective than ever—a phenomenon hard to understand, but made roughly familiar since the relevant works of Orwell and Milosz.

As for the Soviet State, it can mobilise such a legacy of territories, subject populations, and material and human resources that it can still call upon superior power for some time to come. But, above all, it must be understood that this State does *not* obey what Régis Debray calls "the rules of the banal non-revolutionary game"—moves, countermoves, ambiguous alliances, self-interest, zones of influence, etc. It is not true that there has been a straightforward substitution of an everyday strong State for the dying ideology, because that State exists essentially in order to achieve the goals of its legitimating ideology. The Leninist faith has evaporated; in its place we have, not the classic Russian State, but the State of Leninism, whose aim is not to extend the "Russian Empire" but to increase the number of Communist States—which is another thing altogether. The list of historic defects (which Régis Debray is only one of the latest to enumerate) would be disabling weaknesses for our own kind of State apparatus, but they are not so crippling for the Soviet State, whose objectives are not the same. It is in relation to these objectives that we have to draw up a different list—just as the USSR does; after all it has been treating its specific "mortal weaknesses" fairly successfully for some 69 years now. Confusing the classical State with this new type of State is Régis Debray's major error, just as it was the error, on the Right of the General and of all related Gaullist thinking.

HAVING THUS transformed the Soviet threat into an everyday contingency, Régis Debray draws attention to some other forces which he considers more real and more active, namely Nationalism and Islam. These powerful forces certainly exist, and we have every reason to take note of them; but the fact is that they only become a threat in the various instances in which they become associated with the Communist movement and/or the Soviet International. This provides them with a form of more disciplined organisation and a concentrated method of political action, and substantially alters more traditional content.

Nor is this all. His reduction of the Soviet State to the level of "banality" enables Debray to give vent to and justify his visceral hatred of the United States—the one and only great

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power, the one true Empire, the real threat looming over Europe! Admittedly we are influenced by the prestige and potency of the American world, but this is not the effect of an imperialist design, which does not exist. Furthermore, the immense potential of the democratic powers' resources is not, *per se*, a guarantee of world political security. It is not our higher standard of living or our technical and cultural vitality that will halt armies: it is armies.

Régis Debray brings us back, then, to the symmetrical vision of "the two Empires", "the two superpowers"; he gives a new lease of life to old and familiar views (long put forward, for example, by André Fontaine of *Le Monde*). Unfortunately it is a natural consequence of these views that France ought primarily to oppose the more powerful, the United States, while reaching some compromise with the weaker, the USSR. We are back to the position of Charles Maurras and the worst kind of *gaullisme de gauche*.

Here, then, is the waywardness of Régis Debray: a simple intellectual error, grafted on to an irrational passion, leads to the supreme political sin: that of choosing the wrong enemy.

AUTHORS

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Lawrence Sail's book of poems, *Devotions*, will be published early next year by Secker & Warburg.

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Love, Sex & Desire

Roger Scruton's Philosophy—By JOHN WEIGHTMAN

WHEN I BEGAN on this book[1]—the first by Roger Scruton I have read—I was quite captivated by his tone of commanding intelligence and his effortless handling of philosophical and literary references. Sex has been a special puzzle for me since my teens. Was it not odd of God to impose the sex difference on certain parts of the organic world, but not on others, and to decree that human sex in particular should be such a tangle of uncertainty, misery, and delight? Adult experience, even reinforced by eighteen months' instructive service with the Williams Committee on Obscenity & Film Censorship, has left my mind still full of question marks. Here, now, was a work which proposed to put the phallus in its general philosophical perspective. How satisfying! The mystery would not be solved, of course; it is too late to hope for that; but its elements might be given a revealing rearrangement. I uttered my usual non-believer's prayer: "Please God, let this book not go off, like so many others! . . ."

My euphoria lasted some time—until page 112, in fact, according to my notes—and then I realised that there was to be no revelation. Mr Scruton had begun logic-chopping, with the terrier-like persistence of a certain kind of academic philosopher who, while questioning everyone else's use of words, assumes that his own are stable counters, the meanings of which he can control. Thereafter, my disappointment was tempered by the frequent occurrence of bright remarks on all sorts of subjects, such as the importance of the face in human sex, the psychology of fashion, and the symbolism of the Incarnation. But, for me, the book had collapsed as a structure. However, considered as an idiosyncratic exploration, via the genitals, of the eternal philosophical problem of the mind/body dichotomy, its rather confused mass remains unusually stimulating.

The title is, at first sight, surprising. Why the emphasis on "desire"—which is, probably, for most people, an incidental, though dynamically important, feature of the total phenomenon of sex and/or love? It results (as I understand it) from the author's "Intentionalist" approach, which privileges the mental aspects of mind/body states, so that desire (as he defines it) lies always within the domain of human reason. It took me some time to grasp this point but, if I am not mistaken, the steps towards it are as follows.

There are two main intellectual ways of looking at the world and ourselves: the scientific and the philosophical. Science, even in its present relatively advanced state, can tell us little or nothing about the roots of our consciousness, as we experience it in the process of living. For instance, as I write this sentence, I may be convinced, intellectually, that, like every other happening in the universe, it is being determined by a series of causes and effects of a kind that some super-scientist might one day explain—although the chances are that he would have to be a God-like scientist, looking at the universe from outside—but my conviction is irrelevant to the immediate existential moment. My belief in determinism does not demolish my subjective sensation of being free to write what I will (I leave aside for the moment the question of what it is "to will", in respect of the use of language). My consciousness is riding, as it were, on an unknowable flux of causes and effects. Paul Valéry, a great analyst of consciousness not quoted by Mr Scruton, expressed this in the aphorism: *Nous sommes enfermés à l'extérieur de nous-mêmes.* (We are shut in, outside ourselves.)

SUBJECTIVELY, WE LIVE, then, in this "shallow" or "superficial" mental stratum, unaware of its own determinism, that Mr Scruton, following the German phenomenologists, refers to by the term *Lebenswelt*. The adjectives are paradoxical, of course, since the *Lebenswelt* is "profoundly" or "densely" important for us. As Mr Scruton puts it: "Better the shallowness of persons than the unfathomableness of things"—the word "things", I take it, being meant to include our bodies as objects belonging to the physical universe. Human relationships, as part of the *Lebenswelt*, are primarily dynamic interreactions (reciprocal intentions?) between consciousnesses or subjectivities, not between bodies. Mr Scruton sees even sexual desire as being much less a physical impulse than a psychological

[1] *Sexual Desire: A Philosophical Investigation*. By ROGER SCRUTON. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £18.95, paper £8.95.

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phenomenon, and this explains his singling out of the term. The phallus is, therefore, wholly "philosophicised" from the word go, and the startling principle that "sexual arousal can occur only between persons" is enunciated in various forms throughout the book.

But it would be wrong to suppose from this that Mr Scruton is a simple believer in the traditional view of the superiority of spiritual, over carnal, love. From the start, he also rejects the Platonic argument that we should graduate, through physical love, to a higher, abstract form. "We are animals", he insists, "governed by the implacable requirements of the flesh." But as human animals, each with a subjective point of view and a sense of internal freedom, we are, unlike the other animals, *persons*; that is, the crux of our being is not in our bodies, but in the body/consciousness interplay, or interconnection, which constitutes the *self*.

SO FAR, SO GOOD. But now Mr Scruton makes a dogmatic leap, which carries him beyond my understanding. He declares that the body and the self evolve differently, and he even expresses this in the extreme form: "A person develops in a way that has little or nothing to do with the body." How does he know, when it was previously agreed that the effect of the material universe on the consciousness, through the body, is unfathomable? And is he not elevating the subjectivity of the person almost to the supra-physical and extra-temporal status of a "soul", while avoiding the religious commitment implicit in this term? The word "soul", it is true, slips out occasionally, e.g. "In desire . . . I wish to find a unity between your bodily and personal identity, and to hold in your body the soul that speaks and looks from it. . . ." But one might suppose that it is only being used because of its poetic resonance.

He nowhere explicitly defends the religious concept of the soul, and indeed his exhaustive analysis of the person, which draws on many philosophical sources from Kant to Sartre, leaves our subjective identity hovering insecurely between being and nothingness. He follows Sartrian Existentialism in agreeing that we know ourselves subjectively, in the first place, as discrete moments of being, between which there is no certain connection, apart from the awareness that these moments are apparently being experienced in and by the same body. But whereas Sartre (most of the time) deduces from this that, in practice, we have the right to be completely fluid and changeable, since, also in his view, we are not bound by any pre-ordained general or particular "human nature" (how do I know if, when I wake up tomorrow morning, I shall hold the same opinions or love the same woman as I do today?), Mr Scruton posits an "ideal of personal integrity which requires us to achieve continuity between past, present and future."

This, of course, is the everyday, commonsensical assumption, on which society is run and morality is founded, but Mr Scruton both insists on the extreme fragility of the ideal and yet reinforces its strength with the power of his rhetoric. He quotes Kant to the effect that this personal integrity or transcendental self is "an inevitable idea", a necessary illusion, and then he adds the loaded phrase that it "crowns the responsible being with a metaphysical halo." Gathering momentum, he then declares:

> "Persons envisage themselves as pure, unified individuals, havens of possibility, located outside the limits of natural causality, capable of acting freely and integrally, so as to be responsible for the present action at every future time. This image may have no metaphysical grounding, but it is resurgent in our consciousness, and is never more dominant than in the transports of sexual desire."

This, again, is dogmatic statement rather than philosophical argument. I agree that I have no certainty about my identity as a person; it may be no more than "a well-founded metaphysical illusion", to quote another of Mr Scruton's formulations. But I have never had the feeling that I am "a pure, unified individual . . . located outside the limits of natural causality." On the contrary, the assertion reminds me sharply that I have always been impure, disunited, and aware of being more subject to causality than free from it. The only point on which I can coincide with Mr Scruton is the moral one. Since I belong to society, I am under an implicit contract, whatever my internal shambles, to accept the convention of the coherence of my civic identity. I am morally responsible for what I did last week, although I may now regret it and even wonder how I came to do it.

I may add, with reference to the last phrase of the quotation, that it shows how far sexual temperaments can differ. For me, part of the bliss of physical love—at least, as I remember it now in the wistful blank of *l'après-sexe*—was relief from the strain of trying to hold oneself together as a person, through entering into the warm, virtually anonymous, blur of inter-sexual fusion. This confession may classify me as an infantilist, yearning to travel back upstream, over the birth trauma, to the undifferentiated comfort of the womb; but I doubt it. I am as sceptical about Freudian, or other, psychological imagery as Mr Scruton professes himself to be. I would explain the feeling rather as the pleasure of being, for a while, happily animal, with the sympathetic connivance of another human animal. As the French idiom has it, with a nice sense of the irony of the cultural term: *Nous nous faisions mutuellement une politesse*. Valéry puts it more directly; he has a sentence somewhere to the effect that: *L'amour consiste à pouvoir être bêtes ensemble* (Love consists in being able to be beasts together. *Bête* = animal + stupid, non-thinking). On this view, the fulfilment of sexual desire is a temporary holiday from the self and thought, in which self-awareness survives only as the consciousness of being on holiday in company. If the company is congenial before and after the act, desire expands into love, which, on the non-physical level too, I see as escape from the self into fusion. After fifty years of living together, Darby and Joan may come to feel that their body/minds are sharing the same joint blood-stream, almost as if they were Siamese twins, until the death of one partner shatters the illusion.

The mystery is why arousal is triggered off in us by some individuals and not others. Why can we be animal only with some, and perhaps, in very extreme cases, only with one? We may point to certain physical or mental characteristics, but we

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know that this only touches the surface of something profoundly irrational. And why, in the human world, does desire cover the whole spectrum from the multiple mating of Don Juanism to the settled conjunction of happy marriage? Mr Scruton, insisting doggedly on his key-concept of the person, argues that Don Juan is really a collector of persons; but how can he be, since he never allows himself time to get to know any one woman in the round? He merely repeats his solipsistic dance of seduction, with a slight adaptation to the superficial characteristics of his immediate female target.

Very promiscuous people of both sexes may be so unaware of the fundamental personalities of their partners that they get identities mixed up. I once worked amicably for a while, in a collective situation, with a pretty and exceptionally flighty colleague; when we bumped into each other again a few years later, I was rather taken aback to discover that she had a more intimate recollection of our relationship than I had. The mistake was flattering, no doubt; but it hardly confirms Mr Scruton's concept of desire as being always passionate awareness of the Other as an embodied soul. Desire can obviously take many different, less memorable, forms. How otherwise, for instance, would prostitutes find customers?

In his extreme formulations, Mr Scruton is presumably defining desire as he thinks it should ideally be, not as it very commonly is. He admits the existence of bestiality, which is the polar opposite of his ideal:

> "The bestial person sees himself as he sees the object of desire: a 'mere' animal, acting in a realm where no moral idea troubles the senses, a realm from which the crippling awareness of the other's perspective has been removed. His act . . . voids the body of the spirit which distinguishes it, and exchanges the trouble of human intercourse for the curious pleasure of a palpitating gland."

The emotion throbbing in this beautifully written passage indicates that, in his view, to be a mere animal is a shocking sin. I would say rather that to be animal with a brute animal, instead of with a human animal (with whom, incidentally, one may feel neither "crippled" nor "troubled"), is just a grotesque misdirection of the urge.

Perhaps I may be allowed another illustrative anecdote. Many years ago, during a drinks session in the Waldorf Hotel, after the recording of a discussion programme for BBC World Radio, one of the participants, a Queen's Counsel who was later to sit on the Woolsack, began expatiating on the wickedness of the world and the need to stop it. When our producer, a liberal-minded man, jibbed a little, the QC boomed at him: "What would you have done if, like my client, you had walked into an outhouse and found a farm-hand having intercourse with a sow?" The producer hesitated a moment. "What would I have done? . . . Well, I think I would have said: 'Oh! I do beg your pardon, Sir. . . and Madam!'" This rejoinder has always stuck in my memory as an admirably humane recognition of the tragi-comic pathos of the sexual instinct operating, as it so often does, outside any real moral context.

On the one hand, then, Mr Scruton proclaims our animal nature, and his gift for the juicy, phenomenological phrase certainly suggests that he has an animal nature himself. On the other hand, he seems unwilling to resign himself to the temporary abeyance of thought in the conception and fulfilment of desire. He replaces the usual mind/body tug-of-war idea (desire is, in the first place, before it develops all its psychological richness, a naked, physiological urge demanding an outlet—and, at a pinch, any outlet: in the absence of "normal" sex, nocturnal emissions, masturbation, temporary homosexuality, etc.) with an ideal vision of man as a thought-saturated being, a kind of systematic philosophic totality, permeated by soul to the tip of his penis. Although he attacks Plato's abstractionism, he himself rejects the idea that desire belongs, in any respect, to some "lower part" of our nature:

> ". . . only a rational being can experience desire, and those sentiments that are so often slighted, as being indicative of our animal nature, are sentiments that no mere animal has ever felt."

Again, one could ask: how does he know? And what does he mean by a "sentiment"? He is echoing Descartes' pre-Evolutionary conviction of the absolute difference between *l'animal-machine* and the human being. But even if the animal has no developed self-awareness, desire seems to be visible in the animal world.

I have just watched two sparrows copulating on the branch of an apple-tree. The female whirred her wings pleadingly and uttered inviting little cheeps. The male, looking eager but flustered, had to make several attempts—I counted at least seven—before he accomplished Nature's purpose. As a pure *animal-machine*, he seemed to be slightly on the blink. One could easily imagine him thinking: "Damn! Muffed it again! What did they recommend in *The Sparrow's Guide to Practical Sex*? She twists her tail to the left, and I bear down to the right? . . . Or was it the other way round?"

Of course, we must resist the temptation to anthropomorphise, but I don't see why we should not say that this little scene exibited desire in action. True, it was not desire accompanied by the gorgeous poetic symbolisations that adorn the mating of Romeo and Juliet; but perhaps some human conjunctions are not much more articulate. To maintain that animals don't feel desire, because they don't appear to have any linguistically symbolised self-consciousness, is like asserting that they never experience hunger, because they don't cook their food and have no concept of *haute cuisine*.

There is a further difficulty about Mr Scruton's standpoint. If man is an evolved animal, there must have been a time, before he stumbled on the invention of language, when he was still a "pure" animal, and at that stage he must have copulated like the birds, if not like the bees. The possibility of linguistic symbolisation may even exist (in a latent or permanently aborted form) in some other animals. Be that as it may, we have to choose between two hypotheses. Either we are animals who have been "improved" through the inherent possibilities of their original nature, and are therefore wedded directly to their animal past. Or we are a special case;

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our self-consciousness is a divine spark, instilled, at some precise point, from the Beyond, and we are back to theology, which is Man trying to tell himself what God is up to.

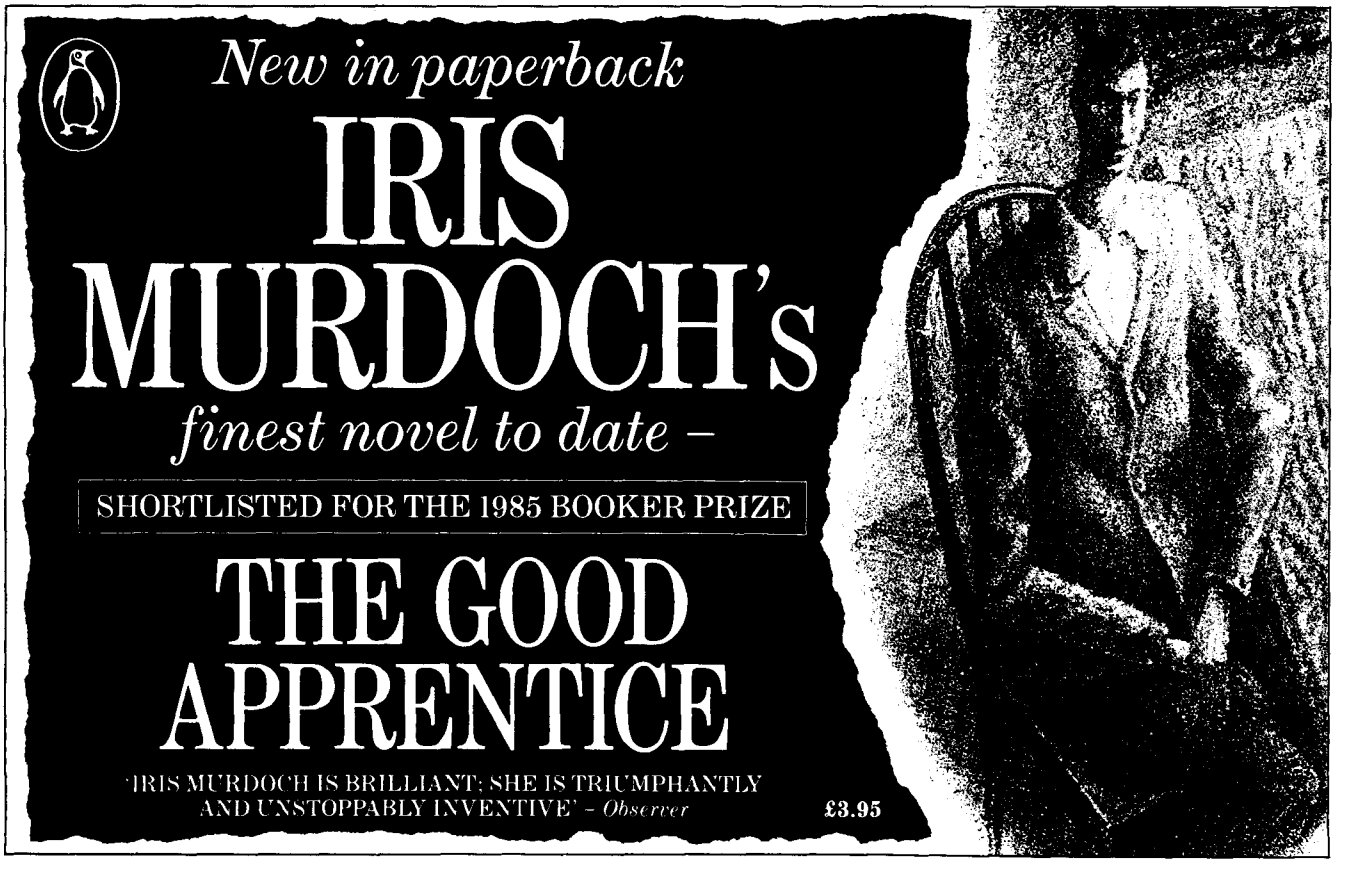
I HAVE ALREADY pointed out that Mr Scruton comes near, at an early stage, to accepting the hypothesis of the soul. At the outset, however, he had specifically rejected religion, because of "the scepticism . . . which attaches to God himself." But he did so with regret:

> "It is . . . a singular disadvantage of philosophy that it must by-pass the appeal to faith and so deprive itself of the most vivid symbols whereby our intentional understanding is focused. . . . The philosopher must pass beyond and behind faith, and look on the human condition with the uncommitted gaze of the philosophical anthropologist. . . .
>
> There are genuine objective truths about the *Lebenswelt* to be understood by philosophical analysis."

Through the use of the expressions "uncommitted gaze" and "objective truths", is he not now smuggling the idea of scientific neutrality back into phenomenology? The *Lebenswelt* is, by definition, the domain of subjectivity, and contains nothing that is objectively given. We each have a distinctive, phenomenological grasp of the world, determined by our individual sensibility, and communication consists in pooling our phenomenological perceptions, through the uncertain medium of language, with the hope of consensus on certain points and the certainty of disagreement on many others. Optimistic humanism, the basis of modern European life since the Enlightenment, is founded on the expectation that consensus can be achieved on the vital, major issues, and that disagreement will persist only on the non-vital ones, which give interesting variety to culture. But, of course, optimistic humanism is no more than a necessary working hypothesis. Both the present world-scene and the historical record suggest rather that the unavoidable truth about human life, seen from its own point of view, is tragi-comic Absurdism. Actually, all the great figures of the Enlightenment, to whom Mr Scruton refers so slightingly, perfectly well realised this. (The durability of Christianity, one might say, rests on the fact that it is a poetic expression of tragic Absurdism, accompanied by a gratuitously reassuring gloss.)

But, at least, since we are self-conscious beings, our relationship to our phenomenological perceptions is, to some extent, fluid. We each contain a sort of variable. One definition of a person, as Mr Scruton says, is that he can be swayed by reason, as no animal can. He may come to see, through debate, that his perceptions were mistaken, incomplete, inadequately formulated, or peculiar to himself.

All this is very commonplace, but it has as its (perhaps less obvious) corollary that the *Lebenswelt*, as a whole, is fluid. There are no absolute or objective truths about it enshrined



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in tradition, whether religious or secular, that are to be taken intellectually on trust, and that it is the duty of philosophy to defend automatically on the speculative level. Traditions are always a mixture of good and bad, and the good and the bad may change sides with the passage of time. Mr Scruton's authoritative tone, which is at first attractive, because one always enjoys being carried along by a strong intelligence, begins to wear thin when one realises that he uses the device of referring to an undefined permanent body of wisdom, of which he himself sees the rightness, that ordinary mortals need to live by without necessarily understanding it, and that silly modernists ignore at their peril. And, in the later part of the book, he forgets that, as a philosopher, he has denied himself the appeal to faith, and falls occasionally into the language of Christian mysticism:

> ". . . it is through watching, caressing and outlining the human form that we come to understand the full richness of human companionship. Without these experiences, all visions of heavenly bliss would be seriously impoverished. . . . We yearn . . . to *justify* the human body, to give grounds for feeling that this is God's image."

These bland assertions side-step two philosophical questions: Have visions of heavenly bliss any intellectual credibility? And how can "God", who is nothing if not infinite, be a person with an image, since "person" and "image" both suppose finite embodiment?

ANOTHER RELATED PROCEDURE is his enunciation of very personal quirks with a rhetorical vigour that gives them a false air of universal truth. An interesting example of this is to be found in the eloquent pages he devotes to the circumstance, commented upon again and again throughout history (and usually with disgust), that the genitals in both sexes coincide with the urinary tract and are close to the rectum. In this particular context, he happens to be in his body-accepting mood, and he expounds his submission to our animal nature with an almost masochistic intensity. It is "incoherent", he says, to deplore the physiological location of the sexual organs:

> "For love could not (phenomenologically speaking) have chosen a better residence. The sexual parts possess a vital and regularly exercised function (i.e. excretion), which we can control, but which lies importantly beyond the reach of our intentions. . . . They are therefore a symbol of the body's eventual triumph over the will; of its infinite capacity to have the last word. . . . This ability—which is at its most pronounced in death, when the body finally extinguishes all our resistance—is one that we learn to incorporate into our sense of what we are. . . . The sense of the body's authority in sexual passion grows from the familiar call of bodily necessity which, like a daily parade, reminds us of the enduring authority of the sovereign . . . the sexual act is presented to me as the inevitable conclusion of a progressive process of 'embodiment', in which the body's sovereignty is affirmed, and in which I am aware that I *am* my body, and made real through it to you."

This is an enjoyable lyrical flight, rather Sartrian in movement though not in content. But does it not boil down to an *apologia pro sapientiam Dei*? By the happy ordinance of placing sex in or near the organs of excretion, the Creator educates us, gradually and powerfully, in what it is to be embodied souls? Mr Scruton is applauding the universe, or discovering *une harmonie de la Nature*, like Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who believed that the form of the melon demonstrates the wisdom of Providence, since the fruit is so easy to share out at the family dinner-table. But do we need the education, and why should it come from one area of the body?

WE ALL FULLY REALISE, at least from early adulthood, that we *are* our bodies, not only through hunger, excretion and the sexual impulse, but also through fatigue, illness, inexplicable variations in mood, and so on. We also know, through observation, not only that our consciousness will be extinguished by death, but that it may be damaged by senility or dementia, which is the death or diminution of the mind through the malfunction of its bodily support, before all bodily functions have ceased. In a geriatric ward, surrounded by the living dead, it is especially difficult to believe in the existence of the soul. I am kept going only by retrospective devotion to the hulk of the loved one, or by anticipatory human solidarity: there, but for the grace of (?), go I. In short, to quote Valéry again, *le tête-à-tête avec l'organisme*, the drama of selfhood as it vacillates like a candle-flame above the bodily substance which determines it and nourishes it, is the daily stuff of consciousness and needs no particular stimulus.

And, to refer back to a point I touched on earlier, in so far as the articulation of consciousness depends on language, we are still in the grip of our bodies, because we cannot will which words are to rise to the surface of our minds. That is determined by a subliminal physiological process, operating on the particular language or languages that our body-mind happens to have assimilated. We can only choose—again by some unfathomable process—between the words with which our body presents us. Language, therefore, is almost as tyrannically physical as excretion, and indeed has striking parallels with excretion. This is what Valéry means, I suppose, by the aphorism: *Nos convictions sont nos cruelles nécessités*.

Even when, as now, I am struggling indefinitely with the slipperiness of words in order to express my thought as exactly as possible, I still have to admit that, when formulated, it may represent nothing more than an emanation of my individual bodily nature, through the deceptively universalising mirage of language. Nor do I see how to escape the conclusion that even professional philosophers are caught in the paradox of being particular, finite, physical entities, trying to think universal thoughts by means of an instrument—language—the functioning of which lies, at every moment, beyond their ken.

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We may seem to be a far cry, here, from the phallus. But it is a merit of Mr Scruton's book that, in spite of its ambiguities, it forces the reader to decide, by way of sex, where he stands with regard to the general problem of the status of the human consciousness. It will be obvious that I am in a different camp from Mr Scruton. Although Evolutionary theory still bristles with unsolved problems, I accept the hypothesis of human beings as evolved animals, whose consciousness is a very vulnerable flickering on the surface of a mystery, and who should be all the more prudent about their assumptions, in that they do not yet understand the nature of the medium in which they are formulating them. Valéry has an excellent definition of this non-metaphysical attitude: *L'homme est un poste d'observation perdu dans l'étrange* (Man is an observation post, lost in strangeness).

Mr Scruton, on the contrary, whether his belief in the soul is settled or intermittent, has a remarkable degree of metaphysical confidence, which leads him to operate, as it were, from the postulate of the divine downwards, rather than upwards from the postulate of the animal/human. He resorts, at intervals, to a curiously metaphysical concept of "gender" which is almost like an archetype floating in the *Lebenswelt* ("a willow, a Corinthian column, a Chopin nocturne, a Gothic spire" are all, apparently, feminine). He remarks, approvingly it would seem, that "the God of Islam has a gender, despite his wholly disincarnate nature." And when, in his final chapters, he sets out "to rescue sexual morality from the morass in which modern ways of thinking have enticed it", and deals with such particular problems as masturbation and homosexuality, he spends a lot of time trying to define "perversion", which is again a metaphysical category, because it supposes, in the last resort, that there is a divine plan, from which some forms of behaviour depart. But our only concrete evidence about God's will is the bewildering abundance of nature, which contains all deviations from the statistical norm and is, as Mr Scruton admits, outside any moral law. Morality consists in deciding, on the human level, which perversions are harmful, and which innocuous, from the collective point of view—and on this level Mr Scruton is surprisingly unhelpful, and even at times unexpectedly tentative.

About homosexuality, for instance, one would expect him to say, with the Catholic Church, that it is a perversion, which it is, in the immediate neutral sense, being a physiologically sterile use of the male penis and the female vagina. But he prevaricates about this, and argues that its real shortcoming, from the Intentionalist angle, is avoidance of the male/female tension which exists in heterosexual love; homosexuality is too facile, being transferred Narcissism. This has often been said, and is perhaps true in some cases, but what about the moral problem of born homosexuals, who may accept the diagnosis but cannot change their nature? Are they, or are they not, entitled to say: "Better transferred Narcissism than no sexual communion at all"? Mr Scruton does not consider the question. There is a large area here, which includes rape, paedophilia, exhibitionism, and active sadism, where it is often difficult to draw the line between pathological determinism and moral choice. The majority of us have an understandable urge to limit the pathologically harmful. The urge is moral, but its application has to take into account the impartial scientific data, in so far as they can be established. Mr Scruton merely says that modern scientific findings cause our moral principles to waver, without telling us what to do about this.

He ends with an astonishingly simplistic and moralising chapter, entitled "The Politics of Sex", which contains an apologia for the institution and sacrament of marriage, including arranged marriage ("the acceptance of human destiny"), as being a necessary moral bulwark of society and a vital aspect of modern conservatism. This strikes me as being almost Sex for Young Fogies. I was happily married, without benefit of sacrament, for five-sevenths of my life to date; but it never occurred to me that this circumstance was, in any respect, a traditionalist moral achievement out of line with my generally liberal-left views, or, on the other hand, that conjugal fidelity needed to be included as an item in some progressive manifesto. It was rather a stroke of luck, a gift of fate, shared by a few other couples of our acquaintance on both Right and Left. And, looking back over the adulterers, adulteresses, bachelors, homosexuals and neuters I have known, I fail to discern any coherent connection between their sexual behaviour and their political alignments. Stable marriage is an arrangement which suits some people, but not all; it favours the upbringing of some children, but again not of all. Sex comes within the domain of morality in an

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extraordinarily complex way, and while it obviously involves issues of civic virtue, it can rarely be directly related, I should say, to party politics.

A LAST ANECDOTE by way of evidence. I remember once discussing, with the late Michel Saint-Denis, the known proclivities of the English Members of Parliament whom we encountered in our work for the French Service of the BBC.

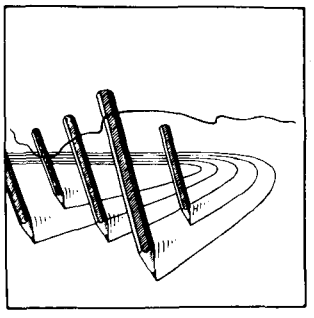
"*Evidemment*", Michel concluded, "*les goûts sexuels ne respectent pas les partis*" (Sexual tastes are no respecters of parties, toe no party line).

"*C'est le cas de le dire*!" I responded, as we both suddenly realised with amusement that he had, unintentionally, made a rather significant pun on the homophones *partis* (political parties) and *parties* (pudenda, *parties honteuses*). Sexual tastes don't even respect the overt functions of the pudenda. In other words, the phallus is one of the eminently unpoliticisable seats of wayward, multiform Nature.

However, there are distinct signs of fatigue in the last part of the book, and so it should perhaps be disregarded. The interest lies in the earlier chapters where Mr Scruton struggles so vigorously, and with many a striking phrase, to spiritualise the body, while expressing his obvious love/hatred for it. I would guess him to be a half-convinced, non-denominational Christian, with a strong tendency towards angelism. Oddly enough, it was another half-believer, Pascal, who uttered the appropriate warning: *Qui veut faire l'ange fait la bête.*

Drawing the Lines

Thoughts on Europe—By VERNON BOGDANOR



THESE TWO HANDSOME *Handbooks to the Modern World*,[1] containing basic information, data, and articles on the problems of the countries in their areas, invite reflection on Europe as it was and as it has become. Their titles—*Western Europe* and *The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*—divide the Continent on a geopolitical rather than a geographical basis. The European peninsula, the western portion of a vast Eurasian landmass, is bounded geographically by the Urals in the east, and in the south by the Caspian Sea. Thus Russia lies partly in Europe and partly outside, and this geographical fact forms the basis for a deeper uncertainty about whether Russia is *culturally* part of Europe, whether she belongs fully to European civilisation. Her credentials in this regard were suspect even before 1917 when the triumph of Bolshevism seemed to move her completely out of the European mainstream.

George Schöpflin's *Handbook* is entitled *The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe* (emphasis added), with the implication that Russia, even west of the Urals, is not wholly part of Europe. Yet, even if seen by others as extra-European, did not the Russian intelligentsia and middle classes consider themselves before 1914 fully European? Did the inhabitants of St Petersburg not see themselves as Europeans? And were Czechoslovakia and Hungary part of *Eastern* Europe? Did their citizens consider themselves "Eastern Europeans" before Soviet occupation of their countries? As late as 1943, Winston Churchill, that child of a liberal civilisation which had come to fruition in the Victorian era, could write that the Russians had established themselves, after World War II, "in the heart of Western Europe"; and in 1945, he had written to Eden of "all the great capitals of *Middle Europe* [my emphasis] including Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia."[2] For, after all, Berlin, Budapest and Prague are to the west of Athens and Helsinki, two capitals lying beyond the sphere of Soviet domination is defined in the famous "Percentages Agreement" at the Moscow Conference in October 1944. And Finland and Greece are, quite rightly, included in the *Handbook on Western Europe* which analyses the 27 non-Communist states of Europe. For it is the division of Europe into two blocs which "has imposed a terminology for which there is no historical justification."[3]

Politics, not for the first time, has superseded geography. Indeed, the division of Europe has no rationale in geography or culture; no basis in nature or history. It is in essence arbitrary, resulting as it does from *political* decisions, from decisions taken—and equally, from decisions not taken—in the years between 1941 and 1948 by the leaders of the Grand Alliance: Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin. Those parts of Europe which fell under Soviet domination were (with the exception of Austria), forced to abandon the institutions and practices of liberal democracy; the rest of Europe (with the exception of Portugal until 1974, Spain until 1975, and Greece between 1967 and 1974), retained the freedom to choose their form of government, and the right, as Jan Masaryk put it, "to shout in the streets, 'I don't like my Prime Minister'."[4]

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[1] *Handbooks to the Modern World. Western Europe*. Edited by RICHARD MAYNE. *The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*. Edited by GEORGE SCHÖPFLIN. Muller, Blond and White, £35.00 each volume.

[2] Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War. Volume VI: Triumph and Tragedy* (Cassell, 1954), pp.ix, 438.

[3] George Lichtheim, *Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Cardinal edition, 1974), p.381.

[4] Cited by Masaryk as a war aim in Richard Mayne, *Postwar: The Dawn of Today's Europe* (Thames and Hudson, 1983), p.122.

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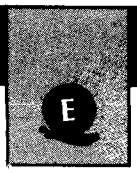

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THE PARTITION OF Europe and of Germany remains the fundamental fact about the Continent more than 40 years after the end of the Second World War. The map of the occupation zones of Germany ("decided rather hastily at Quebec in September 1944, when it was not foreseen that General Eisenhower's armies would make such a mighty inroad into Germany"[5]) was perceived as strictly temporary. Instead, it has congealed into permanence.

> "This war [Stalin told Djilas in April 1945] is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army has power to do so. It cannot be otherwise."[6]

Yet the two blocs are differentiated less by their social systems than by their political structures and their relationship to the Soviet Union and the United States. To call Western Europe "capitalist" is not very helpful if it implies that the economic organisation of countries such as Austria and Sweden is basically similar to that of the United States; while the fundamental reality of the states of Eastern Europe is not that their economies are all, to some degree, centrally planned, but rather that they all lack political freedom and, with the exception of Albania, Romania and Yugoslavia, national independence as well. On one side of the line, liberal democracy and self-government; on the other dictatorship and subordination to the Soviet Union. It could not have been otherwise.

EUROPEAN HISTORY since 1945 has been marked by a glacially slow pattern of change. The central features of European politics since the death of Hitler—its division along artificial boundaries, and its relative weakness *vis-à-vis* the superpowers—remain as they were 40 years ago. Every attempt to alter the post-War settlement in Europe has foundered. Stalin was just as unwilling to help the Communists in Greece as Eisenhower and Dulles, for all their talk of "rollback", were to assist the Hungarians in 1956. "The uprising in Greece will have to fold up", Stalin told the Yugoslavs in 1948.

> "'Do you believe'—he turned to Kardelj—'in the success of the uprising in Greece?'
>
> Kardelj replied, 'If foreign intervention does not grow, and if serious political and military errors are not made.'
>
> Stalin went on, without paying attention to Kardelj's opinion: 'If, if! No, they have no prospect of success at all. What, do you think that Great Britain and the United States—the United States, the most powerful state in the world—will permit you to break their line of communication in the Mediterranean? Nonsense. And we have no navy. The uprising in Greece must be stopped, and as quickly as possible.'
>
> 'Not even today [Djilas reflected in 1961] am I clear on Stalin's motives in condemning the uprising in Greece. Perhaps he thought that to create still another Communist state—Greece—in the Balkans, when not even the others were reliable and subservient, could hardly have been in his interest, to say nothing of possible international complications, which were becoming more and more threatening and even if they did not drag him into war, they might endanger positions he had already won.'"[7]

The post-War settlement came to be underwritten, not only by the Russians, but by the Americans as well. Yalta had, after all, been welcomed by Republicans such as Herbert Hoover and John Foster Dulles, "who said that it showed that the United Nations could and would stick together after all", as well as by supporters of Franklin Roosevelt.[8] The rhetoric of anti-Communism was later to prove valuable for domestic political purposes, but the hard lesson of 1956 had to be learnt again in 1968 when the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia.

> "'For us', Brezhnev told Dubcek in 1968, 'the results of the Second World War are inviolable, and we will defend them even at the cost of risking a new war.' And then he said in so many words that they would have undertaken the military intervention in Czechoslovakia even if such a risk had existed. But, he added, there was no such danger. 'I asked President Johnson if the American government still fully recognises the results of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. And on August 18 I received the reply: as far as Czechoslovakia and Rumania are concerned, it recognises them without reservation; in the case of Yugoslavia, it would have to be discussed. So what do you think will be done on your behalf: Nothing. There will be no war. Comrade Tito and Comrade Ceausescu will say their piece, and so will Comrade Berlinguer. Well, and what of it. You are counting on the Communist movement in Western Europe, but that won't amount to anything for fifty years.'"[9]

In Western Europe, the idea of a "Third Force" has been championed at different times by Socialists, Gaullists, and advocates of a European nuclear deterrent. Many on the British Left hoped, in the immediate post-War years, that British Socialism might constitute a third ideological path midway between American capitalism and Soviet communism. De Gaulle and his followers spoke of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. Some enthusiasts for European unity dreamed of a Western European entity with its own nuclear capacity such as would enable it to do without the American umbrella. All these notions came to nothing, smothered by the facts of power. Democratic socialists and

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[5] Winston S. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy*, p.448.

[6] Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (Penguin edition, 1963), p.90.

[7] Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, pp.140-141.

[8] H. G. Nicholas (ed.), *Washington Despatches 1941-1945: Weekly Political Reports from the British Embassy* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), p.516.

[9] Zdenek Mlynar, *Night Frost in Prague: The End of Humane Socialism* (C. Hurst and Co., 1980), p.241. Mlynar, a Party Secretary of the Czech Communist Party during the "Prague Spring", was present at the fateful meeting with the Soviet Politburo after the abduction of the Czechs to Moscow in August 1968.

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Gaullists alike have found themselves as much dependent as the most enthusiastic pro-Americans upon the willingness of the United States to defend Western Europe. Politically, then, the division of Europe into two blocs remains, as Brezhnev put it, "inviolable."

AND YET THIS DIVISION not only bifurcates the Continent politically; it also tears apart a certain unity of spirit and civilisation, difficult enough to define, but well understood by those who refuse to believe that the descendants of Adam Mickiewicz and Franz Kafka belong to a different world from that of the heirs of Proust and Mann. "We can no longer pretend", declared George Bernanos, "that European Man is Man. But we believe that European civilisation is inseparable from a certain conception of man."[10] It may even be that this "certain conception" survives beyond the watch-towers and minefields which divide the Continent, so as to ensure that the European schism does not remain permanent.

THE MOST STRIKING CHANGE in the politics of non-Communist Europe since 1945 has been the growth of the movement towards European unity. In the original edition of the *Handbook on Western Europe*, published in 1967, the editor, the late John Calmann, saw the Community as "a revolutionary challenge to the traditional concept of the European state", and so, despite setbacks, it remains. The structure of the Community's institutions expresses the intentions of its founders to transform the traditional pattern of intergovernmental cooperation into a true process of economic and political integration. Indeed, much of the recent politics of the Community's member states can only be understood in terms of the tension between a recognition of the need for interdependence and the countervailing force of national sovereignty.

Thus, in 1967, Calmann could argue that the distinctiveness of Western Europe as a region of the world lay in:

> ". . . the similarities of the problems which the various countries face, rather than their national characteristics. Indeed, the oddest thing about Western Europe is that it still has such a variety of structures to deal with what is really much the same business—if the object of a handbook on Western Europe is to give the basic facts about the area, then it must stress the interdependence of the nations of which it is made up, and the community of needs and expectations formed by its peoples."[11]

In non-Communist Europe, individual states have found that they have more chance of resolving their problems if they act together. In Communist Europe, by contrast, "socialist internationalism" implies Soviet domination, and autonomy depends upon escaping from the Russian embrace. It is a paradox that progress in Western Europe depends upon

[10] Cited in John Lukacs, *The Last European War: September 1939—December 1941* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), p.512.
[11] Reprinted in the new edition of *Western Europe*, pp.xiii, xiv.

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transcending national sovereignty, but in Eastern Europe upon restoring it.

It would, of course, be idle to deny that there have been major changes since 1967, and this is recognised by the new editors. "The biggest, most obvious change is the world recession", which "has made a deep wound affecting attitudes and policies that appear unconnected with it." The main impact of the recession upon the domestic policies of the countries of Western Europe has been a paradoxical one. For, like the 1929 slump, the recession has served to undermine the credibility of the Left—not only that of Marxist parties, but also that of democratic socialists.

Of course, socialist governments continue to be elected. What they are unable to do is implement socialist policies. The economic and social agenda of politics has shifted markedly to the Right, so that whether a government is headed by Mrs Thatcher or by François Mitterrand, by Helmut Kohl or Bettino Craxi, makes less difference than traditional ideological categories would suggest. Capitalism was under more of a threat in the affluent 1950s and 1960s than it has been since 1980; for, as Joseph Schumpeter predicted over 40 years ago, socialism could only be built, not on the ruins of capitalism, but on its success, which would create an "atmosphere of almost universal hostility to its own social order."[12]

THE RECESSION in Western Europe has stimulated a politics of national self-assertion. Yet this—by contrast, at least, with the 1930s—has been as much a matter of rhetoric as of practical action. What is perhaps remarkable, as Richard Mayne points out in his introduction to *Western Europe*, is "that the post-War international system has resisted resurgent nationalism as well as it has."

In 1979, direct elections to the European Parliament were finally achieved, the first elections ever held under universal suffrage to an international assembly. Direct elections raised expectations which, perhaps, they could never satisfy, but the very powerlessness of the European Parliament has stimulated attempts, such as the Draft Treaty endorsed by the Parliament in February 1984, to break the deadlock in Europe. Like Talleyrand when asked what he did during the French Revolution, the European Community can at least say that it has survived.

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THERE HAVE, RECENTLY, been signs in Britain, if not in other countries in Western Europe, that the ideological mood is changing and that the period of ascendancy of the populist Right is passing away. Mrs Thatcher's Government has altered in a very marked way the ideological parameters of British politics. It has promulgated legislation which is probably irreversible—the creation of a legal framework for the trade unions, the sale of council houses, and the privatisation of major public corporations—but it has not succeeded in its self-appointed task of altering basic cultural assumptions.

Mrs Thatcher and her supporters have always insisted that economic progress would depend not only upon the mechanics of economic management, but rather upon a fundamental change in social attitudes. Yet, if survey evidence is to be believed, this change has not taken place. Indeed, the reverse has occurred. A survey conducted by Gallup in December 1984 showed that attitudes of self-reliance were less widespread in Mrs Thatcher's Britain than under Attlee's Labour administration just after the War.

Which of these statements do you most agree with?

	May 1947	Dec 1984
The important job for the government is to make certain that there are good opportunities for each person to get ahead on his own.	**40**	**30**
The important job for the government is to guarantee every person a steady job and a decent standard of living.	**55**	**65**
Don't Know.	**5**	**5**

Further, there has been a massive shift since 1979 in the willingness of the public to pay higher taxes if this means improving public services. In 1979, the public was evenly divided on whether the priority for government was to cut taxes or increase services. In February 1985, however, only 17% of those surveyed favoured cutting taxes as compared to 63% who believed that the improvement of public services was a more important priority. Mrs Thatcher, concludes Professor Anthony King:

> "has failed to bring about a revolution in mass economic and political thinking in Britain. She has been a powerful educator, but adverse economic circumstances turn out to have been even more powerful. The paradox is that Thatcher's message, designed to deal with hard times, is probably saleable to a democratic public only in good times."[13]

Other governments of Western Europe, and especially

[12] Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1943; 4th ed., Allen & Unwin, 1950), p.143.

[13] *Public Opinion* (June/July 1985), p.58. The surveys were undertaken by Social Surveys (The Gallup Poll) Ltd., London.

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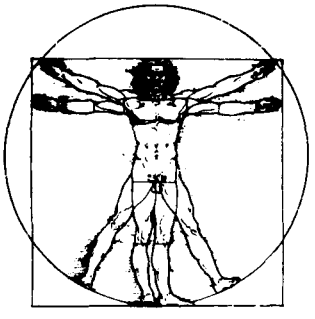
Jacques Chirac's new administration in France, elected on a similar prospectus to that espoused by Mrs Thatcher, might be well advised to look carefully at the consequences of the British experiment before undertaking similar ventures of their own.

BOTH DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM and Thatcherism, then, turn out to be philosophies more suited to affluent times and a period of prosperity. They have little to offer in the unsympathetic and harsh economic environment of the 1980s. In Eastern Europe, Communism is no longer a living ideology, having degenerated into a set of mechanical slogans whose function is to allow a cynical political élite to keep its hands on the levers of power.

The salvation of Europe is unlikely to be found in the ideologies of the past, but rather in philosophies which, while respecting the realities of political life, are yet able to find a place for the true needs and aspirations of Europeans. What these philosophies will be these *Handbooks* cannot tell us. Their authors are no more able than anyone else to predict the future. But what they have succeeded in doing is to provide a map which will enable us to understand the contours of the present.

Stories & Histories

Recent Fiction—By MICHAEL HULSE



WITH EMERSON, Robertson Davies believes there is properly no history, only biography. His most accomplished three-decker, the Deptford trilogy—*Fifth Business* (1970), *The Manticore* (1972), and *World of Wonders* (1975)—includes in its encyclopaedic mass many experiences of our century: the fighting of the First World War, Jungian analysis, the rise of the new businessman and the new artist-entertainer, changing attitudes to class, propriety and sexuality. But it includes them within three autobiographical narratives, and history is given the scale and perspective of the human actors on the stage. Dunstan Ramsay, narrator of *Fifth Business*, learns only later from textbook overviews what Passchendaele meant in context; his own experience as an individual is of a depth of despair, a miraculous revelation, and the loss of a leg.

Personal truths, whether of a mythic, religious, or existential nature, interest the novelist more than the truths of the histories. However, Robertson Davies is fond of the conventional linearity which biography in a historical frame permits, and his new novel is an epic unfashionably committed to a beginning, a middle, and an end. The hero of *What's Bred in the Bone*,[1] Francis Cornish, is familiar to us from *The Rebel Angels* (1981), where three executors, central characters in that book, dispersed Cornish's art collection. In the new novel, we learn of the life that created that collection: we see Francis Cornish born to a small-town senator's family in provincial Ontario, where the idiot cuckoo-in-the-nest first son is hidden away in the attic; we see Francis learning a first artistic ambition when sketching corpses in Zadok's funeral parlour; we see poised, admirable Francis studying at Oxford, moneyed Francis marrying charming, threadbare, deceitful Ismay, dutiful Francis supporting his absentee wife and her dank English family; and we follow his delightful apprenticeship to the magisterial Tancred Saraceni, from whom he learns to be disciplined and demanding in art—and to paint forgeries.

The proximity of genuine and fake in the artist gives Davies a theme on which he can ruminate, rumble and guffaw, in a tone that marries concerns of Thomas Mann to the manner of Belloc or Chesterton. Francis, missing greatness but with the consolation of wealth, becomes an influential collector and benefactor, and his career, Davies implies, is typical of Canada's: he has judgment, energy and talent, but lacks that certain something that would make him more than a copier of other men's greatness, so he must content himself with the role of the perfect, discerning consumer.

Robertson Davies has expressed enthusiasm for Hazlitt and Beerbohm, Wodehouse and Ronald Knox, Osbert Sitwell and Mervyn Peake, and his own fiction has the wit, good manners, and decorous exuberance we'd expect of a man with these tastes. *What's Bred in the Bone* is unfailingly entertaining, the work of a writer who is high everything: church, table, Tory, brow, and falutin'. Indeed, it is so relentlessly entertaining, and entertaining in so gloriously Edwardian a way, that unhappily I found myself tiring of it.

Partly this may be because *What's Bred in the Bone* is very much the mixture as before: the old preoccupations with royalty, money and Oxford are here again; favourite themes are repeated (the fraught mother-son nexus, the son's failure to find enduring love, the need to take the supernatural literally); the figure of Saraceni reincarnates the Jesuitical instructor we met in Ignacio Blazon; and numberless details are reused from earlier work. Partly too it is because Davies's prose, though energetic and inventive, remains

[1] *What's Bred in the Bone*. By ROBERTSON DAVIES. Viking, £9.95.
[2] John Mills, *Robertson Davies and His Works* (Toronto, 1985), p. 15.

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curiously savourless. "Whatever else Davies is read for", John Mills wrote somewhat harshly in a recent monograph, "it cannot be for the felicity of his prose."[2] Now professorial, now functional, now bombastic, it is a prose marked too often by failure of pitch, and is curiously reminiscent of the classic school of detective stories. Above all, though, I feel Robertson Davies protests too much. Like Anthony Burgess, he has absorbed vast amounts in an alert lifetime, and in his fiction tries over-anxiously to recycle his information: tucked away in his narratives are vexing essays, tracts and lectures, maxims and meditations, and his people do not so much talk as trade sententiousness, interminably. With Davies and his characters, as with Dr Johnson, there is no arguing, for when their pistols miss fire they knock you down with the butt ends. In *What's Bred in the Bone* there is certainly a brisk deal of vigorous cracking and banging; but there is also too much empty clicking, and tendentious bludgeoning.

Robertson Davies is a Chesterton who wants to be a Chesterfield: a man of robust learning, opinions, tolerances and intolerances, with the aim to be taken for a firm but wise arbiter of conduct and taste. Chesterfield thought it good to be wiser than other people, if possible, but not good to tell them so; Davies, like Chesterton, never tires of telling us so. Isaac Bashevis Singer long ago learnt (as much, I think, from the Yiddish tradition as from personal temperament) that to show is better than to tell, and *The Image and Other Stories*[3] gives us the settled, quiet wisdom of an old age that can teach the values of simplicity. Maybe no single story in this new book matches the very best of Singer's prime—stories such as "Gimpel the Fool" or "The Spinoza of Market Street"—but to measure against Singer's own best is to measure by the highest standards.

Most of these stories, those set in the USA and those set in pre-War Poland, begin plainly and personally, as a man would begin if he had a story to tell among friends.

> "In the years when I worked at a Yiddish newspaper in New York, giving advice, I heard many bizarre stories."
>
> "I have met in my time a number of female rebels, but the first one engraved herself in my memory."
>
> "I receive many telephone calls from my Yiddish readers, and often, when I place the receiver against my ear, nothing can be heard but a tense silence."

Others begin like traditional stove-side tales:

> "In the Polish city of Plotsk there lived a man by the name of Reb Amram Zalkind, who was the court Jew for the squire, Count Bronislaw Walecki."

Still others begin *in medias res*, with a dangling pronoun still to be identified: "We sat in a sort of combined café and garden." "It all happened secretly."

Typically the stories will then describe a principal character who is usually either a man from the narrator's past or a woman who wants to unburden or entangle herself. Frequently there is an account of disappointed love or frustrated hopes; it is told to the narrator, a man probably not unlike Singer who is a writer and a good listener and who is able, merely by creating the framework within which a story may be passed on, to present himself as worldly and well able to understand the caprices of fate. True, Singer's writing establishes its own formula as surely as that of Davies. But Davies, to preserve his authority, needs the postprandial urbanity of the table-talker who registers, with a raised eyebrow, the man who passes the port the wrong way; while Singer's authority is the stronger for its blunt acknowledgement of coarseness.

Of a number of fine pieces in this collection, two stories in particular stand out, in my opinion. "One Day of Happiness" tells of the skittery twenty-four-year-old virgin Fela, whose infatuation with poet-general Adam Pacholski leads her to write a delinquent, heartfelt letter begging for a meeting. Pacholski meets the girl, takes her virginity, and brutally discards her. Fela tries feebly to take her own life. When she is found, the crowd that pushes into her room is accompanied by one of Pacholski's soldiers, "entering with a bouquet of roses, red as blood." It is a brusque, bleeding, hysterical story, vividly sustained by an art as modest as it is powerful.

In "Strangers", an old couple are divorced because Reb Eljokum wants to live his last years in Israel and Bleemele cannot bear to leave her familiar existence. In the event, Reb Eljokum remarries in Jerusalem, taking a young woman, much to the disgust of the narrator's rabbinical family. Soon after, Bleemele remarries too, though not advantageously. "What are husband and wife?" demands the narrator's mother. "Strangers. They are born strangers and die strangers." Bald insights are stated baldly in this briefest of marital moralities. The narrator concludes, "I suddenly decided that if my mother should die, God forbid, and if my father should marry that round little woman with pink cheeks, I would run away from home and become a cabalist and a recluse." It is in the emphatic bluntness of these fluttery full-stops that we often see Singer's odd genius most clearly.

If Not Now, When? follows *The Periodic Table*, which earned high acclaim when published in translation last

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[3] *The Image and Other Stories*. By Isaac Bashevis Singer. Jonathan Cape, £9.95.

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year, and will consolidate Primo Levi's growing reputation with his English-speaking readers.[4] In twelve chapters, divided chronologically, Levi follows the fortunes of a number of Jewish partisan fighters in Nazi-occupied Poland from July 1943 to August 1945, when they pass through a transit camp in Italy, headed for Israel.

Mendel and Leonid, Levi's central characters, are made to realise at an early stage that Jews are scarcely better liked by Polish and Russian partisans than by the Germans who are the common enemy. The leader of one partisan band tells Mendel, "They don't like Jews much, and Jews that are armed even less." Another asks, "Is it true that it was your people who crucified Jesus?" Mendel, a watchmaker by trade, is stolid, meticulous, and scrupulous, and, when hunger, danger and the need to keep moving leave time for larger thought, he reflects—albeit inchoately—on the meaning of the War for men such as himself:

> "For the Russians, a longing for home was a not unreasonable hope, even probable: a yearning to go back, a call. For the Jews, the regret for their houses was not a hope but a despair, buried till then under more urgent and serious sorrows, but latent always. Their homes no longer existed: they had been swept away, burned by the war or by slaughter, bloodied by the squads of hunters of men; tomb houses, of which it was best not to think, houses of ashes. Why go on living, why fight? For what house, what country, what future?"

Singer's men and women quote Spinoza and the Talmud—they often have a firm awareness of a body of thought and belief that makes possible the interpretation of individual action. Levi's Mendel would cut a paltry figure in Singer. As he takes part in sabotage, stealing and killing, Mendel moves through history seeing little more than the immediate necessities of the struggle for survival, and only occasionally glimpsing a vast landscape that gives scale and location to his corner of the field; he is ignorant of the Talmud, and the subtler Spinozan implications of his survival escape him. "Spinoza says in his *Ethics* that there is always something left from everything which has lived", said Isaac Bashevis Singer in an interview first published in this magazine.[5] "And so I believe too that the Jews of Poland have not completely disappeared." This quasi-mystical view of the history he describes is Primo Levi's in *If Not Now, When?*, but it is a mark of his sophistication as a story-teller that it is his readers, and not his characters, who discover it.

The tenacity and courage which inform this study in survival are themselves human values, for—in spite of Mendel's despairing reflection that the Jews have no country or future to fight for—the novel is predicated on hope. That hope is symbolised by the child who, conceived in the worst of the last wartime winter, is borne by one of the women in the troop in transit in August 1945. That it is a hope which cannot be accepted unqualified is underlined in Levi's closing paragraph, where doctors, nuns, nurses and Jewish partisans, after the birth of the child, crowd to read a newspaper report: "That newspaper bore the date of Tuesday 7 August 1945 and carried the news of the first atomic bomb, dropped on Hiroshima." Hope is born into a world that has increased its potential for horror and holocaust. And yet it is a living hope, none the less.

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL of epic fiction as history has preferred, in the decade since E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*, to flesh out flashy effects with the respectability of well-researched name-wielding and fact-dropping. The fiction of scholarly sensationalism is of course not only an American phenomenon: Thomas Keneally is in several respects an Australian Doctorow, and the late J. G. Farrell showed in the success of *The Siege of Krishnapur*, and the near-failure of *The Singapore Grip*, what the pros and cons of the method might be. Failure in structural proportion, in the individual realisation of characters, and in the choice of information is the characteristic con, while the advantages are primarily located in the qualities of irony that offer themselves on the frontiers of fact and falsehood. What seems peculiarly American in Doctorow and William Styron and now in William Wharton's *Pride*[6] is a tone of caricature, of foreshortened facility, which can produce a vulgarity of effect which neither Singer nor Levi nor indeed the rumbustious

ALEXANDER ZINOVIEV

The Madhouse

A NOVEL

Translated by Michael Kirkwood

A brilliant satirical critique of Soviet society by the author of *The Yawning Heights*

'Ought to be required reading for anyone caring about the running of half the world' – *Daily Mail*

Gollancz

[4] *If Not Now, When?* By PRIMO LEVI. Translated from the Italian by WILLIAM WEAVER. Michael Joseph, £10.95.

[5] Clive Sinclair, "A Conversation with Isaac Bashevis Singer", ENCOUNTER, February 1979, p. 25.

[6] *Pride*. By WILLIAM WHARTON. Jonathan Cape, £9.95.

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Robertson Davies would be guilty of. *Pride* opens:

> "On October 6, 1938, in Wildwood, New Jersey, a lion, part of a 'Wall of Death' motorcycle act, escaped from his cage on the boardwalk and killed a man.
>
> On that day, Neville Chamberlain was negotiating with Adolf Hitler, giving him a large part of Czechoslovakia called the Sudetenland. It was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Jews throughout the world prayed, fasted, repented, atoned. They had little idea how, during the next seven horrible years, there would be much for all to atone."

The sufferings of the Jews, and the agonies of the Second World War, are in no way Wharton's subject in *Pride*. Establishing the coincidence of a date in this way is a gesture as gratuitous and factitious as the prose of the passage. But William Wharton is a deliberate and caring writer not often prone to the collapse of judgment, and *Pride*, though something of a disappointment from the author of *Dad* and *Birdy*, is nevertheless a substantial and sensitive achievement.

The novel follows two unrelated life-stories (like Davies, Wharton is an Emersonian at heart) to their convergence on that New Jersey boardwalk. One biography is that of Sture Modig, ". . . born in 1896 to Swedish immigrant parents on a 320-acre dairy farm in Wisconsin" (the textures created by abundant detail are central to Wharton's historicising approach to character). Modig is a wonderful learner at school, is gassed with the 32nd Infantry Division in France, and after 1918 has a successful career as a racing driver before fetching up in the small time as a Wall of Death motorcyclist with a faithless wife and a foul, amoral co-performer. The other narrative is told by Dickie Kettleson, the young son of a thoughtful, responsible father who is an active unionist and as such the victim of violence and threats at work. When threats are made against the Kettleson children, the father takes his family away in a hurry for an unplanned holiday in New Jersey, and there Dickie, who loves his own cat called Cannibal, is fascinated by Modig's Wall of Death act, the sensational feature of which is that a lion rides the side-car. A violent climax is reached when Tuffy, the lion, escapes from his cage.

Doubtless *Pride* will transfer well to the screen, for it has powerful action, together with various qualities that are valued by today's movie-makers, such as nostalgia for the inter-War USA, or an emphasis on self-help, resilience, and enterprise. (We think of *Places in the Heart* or *Cross Creek*—William Wharton breaks with fashion in not attaching his virtues to women.) For me, however, the greatest interest of *Pride* lies not in its strong narrative, not in its somewhat nudging exploration of aspects of the title—pride in craftsmanship, pride in the family, pride in emotional and social integrity—but in the love Wharton brings to the prose of everyday satisfaction. It is remarkably difficult to write persuasively of small, ordinary contentment, and Wharton does this extraordinarily well when (for example) Dickie describes the porch-building which his father jobs at to pull his family through the worst of the Depression. William Wharton has the uncommon gift of presenting tenderness and happiness with neither gaucherie nor schmalz but with solid conviction.

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UNTYPICALLY FOR this writer, the title story in William Trevor's new collection[7] has an historical setting. "The News from Ireland" is set in the Irish potato famine and covers a period of some twelve months in 1847 and 1848. The well-to-do Pulvertafts, the English owners of the estate, create artificial labour for the local poor by having a purposeless road built, and dole out soup to the needy, while their English governess confides her distress to her journal and the canny Butler Fogarty appears increasingly sinister. Introducing his *Collected Stories*, Isaac Bashevis Singer claimed that the short story "constitutes the utmost challenge to the creative writer"; and certainly William Trevor, like Singer, has risen to the challenge with resourcefulness and artistic verve elsewhere. But "The News from Ireland" is an unsatisfying fiction, oddly inconclusive and, although it is longer than any other story in the book, unable to aim its themes with a very clear sense of target. All the more curious, then, that as comment on a single historical event it achieves a more obvious cogency than anything in the novels by Levi, Davies or Wharton. The story's title reminds

[7] *The News from Ireland*. By WILLIAM TREVOR. The Bodley Head, £9.95.

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us that in 1848 quite different news was arriving from other European nations, nations where necessary democratic revolutions were being acted out centre-stage; Ireland, William Trevor implies, stood in the wings of history, with problems that were terrible yet rudimentary, and the surly insubordination of a Fogarty is Ireland's pathetic version of the larger insurrectionist passions then being invested in the service of democracy elsewhere. To have seen that pathos is to have had a subtle and unusual insight into historical roles.

There are a dozen stories in *The News from Ireland*, most of them better than the title piece. "On the Zattere", "The Property of Colette Nervi", "Running Away", and "Cocktails at Doney's" are all in one respect or another examples of that sub-genre Trevor excels at, the tourist short story. In these and other stories we encounter once again those threadbare, faded lives that Trevor so feelingly enters: the young woman recoiling from disappointed love into the role of her father's companion; the lame woman making do with marriage to a miser and thief for fear of finding no better; the deserted wife standing by her sick and shabby husband when his fancy piece flits off. Trevor shows us these lives of the not-quite self-effacingly, and with no parading of his own wisdom. Pathos and shortfall and a weary, ironic sadness are the hallmarks of these stories, as of the finest of Trevor's work, in shorter and longer forms.

As in Singer's book, two stories seem to me especially memorable. One of them, "Two More Gallants", tells of a cruel practical joke played on a Joyce scholar who is made to believe that the girl Joyce wrote of in the *Dubliners* story "Two Gallants" is alive and well and living in North Frederick Street in Dublin: the professor swallows the story an old woman has been primed with, skimps his homework, and at a symposium is nastily exposed as a bungler. The other story, "Virgins", is a delightful account of the friendship of two young girls in the 1940s, the loss of both their hearts to a preposterously decadent poser, and the bitterness of rivalry which invades their friendship and estranges them. This is sensitive work, clear, economical, and exactly observed, and shows William Trevor a quiet master of pace, concision and insight.

JAMES LASDUN, like William Trevor, is no stranger to the pages of ENCOUNTER. In *The Silver Age*,[8] he offers ten stories, at least two of which, "Property" and "The Siege", belong with the best short fiction I have seen in the 1980s. "Property" is an ornate and oppressive investigation of greed, narrated by a boy who has "just begun to make the connection between money and happiness" and who is present as his grandmother receives three apparently remorse-stricken reparations for theft and damage from a woman who was once in her service. The two old women involved in these exchanges of property have reached a time of life when the meaning of possession changes and is focused by the approach of death; the boy, by contrast, is acquisitiveness personified, and at the close of the story is so obsessed with counting money won on a horse that he scarcely notices that his grandmother has died in her chair. Lasdun's prose is both opulent and purposeful, a rendering of surfeit bizarrely sharpened and economised: this story alone evidences a writer wholly in control of his instrument.

"The Siege", which has a touch of Ian McEwan about it, describes the attempts of Mr Kinsky upstairs to win Marietta in the basement: when he asks if he can do anything to win her love, she asks him to get her husband out of the jail—"the military barracks of her country's capital"—where he has been for four years. Mr Kinsky does this, and in the very night before Marietta's husband, now released, is due to join her, she gives herself to Kinsky. "Shortly after daybreak they heard the squeal of a taxi's brakes outside the front steps. They held each other tightly in the short pause before Marietta's doorbell rang." So the story ends.

In both "The Siege" and "Property", James Lasdun's mode is closer to fable than to the social, sociable realism of William Trevor; a trick of the light, a sensual adjustment of rhetoric, translates his effects out of the realm of the literal into something strange and haunting. He is a glittering, uncanny, oddly-angled writer, of considerable energy and imagination.

[8] *The Silver Age*. By JAMES LASDUN. Jonathan Cape, £8.50.

Going Outside

Observe these cut roses. Brought in
from thunder they touch brilliance
in cosseted death on the mantelpiece,
and a day's prestige.

More. If we take one from the vase
and pin it on you that rose
knows exquisite triumph,
being something less of a symbol then.

It's done.
Now look—Wind and rain abate
and the roses outside are drawn out by the sun
while those here pursue their decay.

We'd better desert and go outside.
Flowers cool in their roots ought to be noted.
We'll bend, and the rose at your throat
will purple and curl.

Peter Howe

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Books Encountered

History, Truth, Liberty: Selected Writings of Raymond Aron. Edited by FRANCISZEK DRAUS. With a Memoir by EDWARD SHILS. University of Chicago Press, $27.50, £23.50.

Adroit sampler, two-thirds from already translated books, covering historical intelligibility, Marxist illusions, modern society, peace and war, and the reassessment of Max Weber. Edward Shil's *Memoir* is austereley moving.

The Letters of Arnold Bennett: Volume IV, Family Letters. Edited by JAMES HEPBURN. Oxford University Press, £45.

488 letters, previously delayed by copyright, etc., now completing the published selection from Bennett's huge correspondence. The main revelation is of his earthy passion for his two wives, played down in earlier memoirs and biographies. The French he often wrote to the first is surprisingly colloquial.

From Three Worlds: Memoirs. By WILLIAM CLARK. Sidgwick & Jackson, £13.95.

Communicator's-eye view of wartime and post-War affairs in the USA, Downing Street, and the World Bank, by the reporter and idealist who founded the Overseas Development Institute and was Eden's PRO during the 1956 Suez crisis, his diary of which is revealed here. His fatal cancer spurred a witty and courageous pen.

The Shallow Grave: A Memoir of the Spanish Civil War. By WALTER GREGORY. Edited by DAVID MORRIS and ANTHONY PETERS. Gollancz, £10.95.

Knobbly military recollections by a brave working-class former Communist member of the International Brigade, now critical of Stalin's excesses. Its strength is its vivid detail; its weakness is the workmanlike but cliché-inclined prose, presumably from the editors.

Watching the Dragon: Letters from China 1983-85. By CHARLES and JILL HADFIELD. Impact Books, £8.95.

"It is as if the clichés are still new in China, not yet worn out." This, on essays about their families by students in their 30s and 40s, fits the Hadfields' fresh but not always surprising Candide-style view of ordinary life in China. Self-confessedly naive, it's none the less bright and sharp.

Marriage and Morals among the Victorians: Essays. By GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB. Faber, £15.95.

Agreeable, perceptive, cultivated studies of the ethical climate and of Bentham, Godwin, Macaulay, Disraeli, the Webbs, and Michael Oakeshott. Most are reprinted from *The American Scholar, Commentary, The Journal of British Studies, The New Criterion*, and *The New Republic*—and none the worse for that.

Intelligence Chief Extraordinary: The Life of the Ninth Duke of Portland. By PATRICK HOWARTH. Bodley Head, £15.

Not some historic worthy, but William Cavendish-Bentinck, wartime chairman of the UK Joint Intelligence Committee, and post-War Ambassador to Poland, unpopular with the Lublin Poles and sacked from the service by Ernest Bevin, at 49 and without a pension, ostensibly owing to a messy divorce. Fascinating.

The Revenge of the Philistines: Art and Culture 1972-1984. By HILTON KRAMER. Secker & Warburg, £12.50.

Magisterial, very precisely written essays recording the transition from modernism to post-modernism. The title is from Kramer's 1975 placing of Tom Wolfe, an exhilarating scourge of modernist nonsense, but an ignoramus about modernist achievements, to which Kramer remains discriminatingly loyal.

The Spanish Civil War: 1936-39. By PAUL PRESTON. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £10.95.

Fair and useful survey of the War, its antecedents and aftermath, by the Director of the Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies and Professor of Modern History at Queen Mary College, University of London. Vivid, unhackneyed black-and-white photographs, collected by Dr Sheelagh Ellwood, complete a fine book.

German Film and Literature: Adaptations and Transformations. Edited by ERIC RENTSCHLER. Methuen, £25, paper £11.95.

Twenty predominantly American essays seeking "to bring a livelier regard for intertextuality" to studies of how German filmmakers have used literature. The filmographies, stills, and perceptions are excellent; the jargon is sometimes a pain.

The Red and the Blue: Intelligence, Treason, and the Universities. By ANDREW SINCLAIR. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.95.

Slightly eccentric return to the "Cambridge spies", arguing that the Cavendish Laboratory was more important, to the Russians and to later generations, than the Apostles—effete survivors of a "dying duck" arts culture contrasted, C. P. Snow-fashion, with science. A reshuffle of two worn packs.

Talking to Myself: A Memoir of My Times. By STUDS TERKEL. Harrap, £9.95.

Not an autobiography, but glimpses of a life spent tape-recording the great, the good, and the garrulous—few more so, it now appears, than the man with the Uher or Sony and the encouraging smile. Fun, but cutesy.

Britain's Civil Wars: Counterinsurgency in the Twentieth Century. By CHARLES TOWNSHEND. Faber, £14.95.

Dispassionate survey of British efforts to cope with rebellion in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Northern Ireland, stressing the political and legal dilemmas for a liberal society. The author, a senior lecturer in history at Keele University, sees "no historical basis" for believing that publicity fuels terrorism.

Truth and Lies in Literature: Reviews and Essays. By STEPHEN VIZINCZEY. Hamish Hamilton, £12.95.

Splendidly trenchant, sometimes over-confident polemics collected from *The Sunday Telegraph, Harper's, USA Today*, etc., by the author of *In Praise of Older Women*. His heroes included Stendhal, Kleist, Tolstoy, and others; his *bêtes noires*, Gregor von Rezzori and publicly-funded obscurantist academics.

The Ethics of F. A. Hayek. By GRAHAM WALKER. University Press of America, £19.50, $19.75; paper £7.25, $7.75.

Brief (140-page) philosphical criticism of Hayek's assumptions, contesting the agnostic and evolutionary ethical basis of his economics—but arguing that a Christian ethos could equally support free-market theory. The author, now teaching political science, was formerly an aide to David Stockman.

Franklin of Philadelphia. By ESMOND WRIGHT. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, £21.25, $25.

Eloquent, balanced biography of the New World's Cavour, using the Yale papers (still in process of publication) to flesh out a more complex portrait than the *image d'Epinal* of an enterprising inventor and sage, and admitting how badly, for instance, he treated the Indians, and how philistine a good writer could sometimes be.

R.M.

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NORTH & SOUTH

A Necklace for Azania

By Woodrow Wyatt

THE AFRICAN National Congress want a one-party unitary state like Robert Mugabe of neighbouring Zimbabwe, the man they admire. They intend that the first one-man-one-vote election should be the last, with no safeguards of constitutional rights for minorities which Mugabe was forced temporarily to concede for the whites in parliament as a prelude to Rhodesia becoming Zimbabwe. Of the 32 members of the ANC executive, 15 are also members of the executive of the South African Communist Party, with a number of the remaining 17 sympathising with them. A Stalinoid communism is the dominant ideology of the ANC.

The ANC's demand is that power should be handed by the white government in South Africa "directly" to the ANC—and no nonsense about participatory talks or constitutional safeguards. The so-called "Eminent Persons Group" on its trips on behalf of the Commonwealth to South Africa came to the quite naive conclusion that the Communist nature of the ANC was greatly exaggerated, and that its leaders, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, were amiable liberal-minded fellows anxious to operate a real democracy.

The same irreversible mistake was made by the Hungarian politicians after World War II: they supposed it possible to work in a coalition with the Communists. It was not their fault, since the original mistake was made by Roosevelt, to the alarm of Churchill, in supposing that Stalin (to whom we granted Eastern Europe as a Russian sphere of influence) was a kind of Gladstone who could be relied upon to keep his word about free elections in Poland, Romania, Hungary, and so forth. When Stalin's tanks exposed the cruel joke, to the dismay (which they soon forgot) of liberals, it was too late.

Thus are nations subjected to Communist tyranny to which there can be no foreseeable end. I suppose the "Eminent Persons Group" are no sillier than Roosevelt, who was thought to be a great statesman as he delivered millions of Europeans into perpetual slavery. Communists can be very charming and plausible when they want something you can give them. The ANC took in the EPG—hook, line and sinker. They have also bamboozled not merely liberals, but those who like to think themselves hard-headed.

The ANC protest that their guns and arms—supplied by the Russians (who else?) and used for the mounting of terrorism—are really intended for self-defence against the "institutionalised" violence" of the Pretorian authorities. In our new world of newspeak it is the police—who may be trying to restrain mobs of pickets hurling bricks and other weapons at groups, like miners, wishing to go to work—that are perpetrators of violence. In the current ideological vocabulary, the act of keeping order and seeing that the law is observed is itself an act of violence, even in a liberal democracy like Britain.

In South Africa, when the ANC followers burn the houses and destroy the cars of moderate Blacks who do not wish to attend "mass funerals" of persons they have never heard of, the South African police or military who may be attempting to protect the victims are therefore nothing but the agents of violence. The provocation of "unnecessary violence", even in self-defence, is the cause of riot. And the same doctrine applies to the "Fascist" desire of the authorities to prevent "Necklace" executions of Black moderates who believe there may be a better way forward in South Africa than bloodshed. The "necklaces" (rubber tires filled with petrol, ignited around the neck of a victim) are approved and indeed even urged by Mrs Winnie Mandela, a diligent adviser of the "Eminent Persons", as an essential part of the coming revolution which is destined to establish Black power.

Here is a description I have received of necklace executions, which have been imposed on 172 Blacks between 1 March and 5 June this year (apart from the murder of another 112 Blacks by other means in the same perod):

> ". . . The terrified victim is captured by his (her) executioners. Frequently, his hands are hacked off as a first deterrent to resistance. Barbed wire is otherwise used to tie the helpless victim's wrists together. The tyre is placed over the shoulders and filled with petrol or diesel (the latter has been found to stick to the skin when it burns. It is therefore in greater demand). The fuel is ignited with a match (exhibiting boxes of matches is one way the Comrades [the Black militants] earn the respect of fear in the townships). The victim (if his hands have not been hacked off) is usually forced to light his own necklace. The fuel ignites the tyre which rapidly attains a temperature of 400 C to 500 C. As the tyre burns great clouds of black smoke spiral upwards. Various short-chain

SIR WOODROW WYATT *served as a Labour Member of Parliament for over two decades during the period 1945-1970. In 1946 he was personal assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps on the Cabinet mission to New Delhi which led to the independence of India. He was one of the founders of "Panorama", the BBC's TV-documentary programme. His interests run from horse-racing (he was chairman of the Totalisator Board, for which he was knighted) to printing (he pioneered non-heat-set web-offset colour printing). Among his books are "Southwards from China" (1952), "Turn Again, Westminster" (1973), and "What's Left of the Labour Party?" (1977). He writes regularly for "The Times" and "The Spectator."*

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hydro-carbon type fumes are released which reach a temperature of 300 C. They are inhaled and destroy the lining of the throat and lungs. The rubber melts and the molten rubber runs down neck and torso, burning, as it goes, deeper and deeper into flesh and tissue. (The tyre cannot be removed by others, e.g. family, at this stage, neither can the fire be doused with water.) The victim is now a living corpse. The victim may take up to twenty minutes to die. Whilst he endures this agony, the Comrades stand about laughing and ridiculing him. Often members of his family are encouraged to attempt to save him. The Comrades know that this cannot be done. The molten rubber is similar to boiling tar and cannot be separated from the scorched flesh. . . ."

The South African police and military have themselves been guilty of excessive force and indeed brutality; and there have been hundreds of prosecutions with many verdicts of guilty in the Courts, which are not subject to state control as they are elsewhere in Africa. Still, in my view, nothing the authorities have done, when exceeding their powers, to Blacks is as bad as what the African National Congress causes to be done to other Blacks. What price innocence?

It is important to understand that there is no chance of a South Africa ruled as an ANC one-party state—the much talked-of "Azania"—being any more civilised than other independent African states where the imprisonment, torture, and destruction of opponents and minority tribes by the thousands is habitual. Those woolly-minded, well intentioned, "eminent" (and not so eminent) persons who try to drive South Africa into the hands of the ANC should by now have ample evidence to know the "objective" wickedness of such a policy.

THE ANC HOODWINKED THE "Eminent Persons Group", as they have done other "friends of Black Africa" throughout the world, into supposing that they are the majority representatives of the Blacks. The EPG saw the Zulu Chief Buthelezi only once, compared with their constant hobnobbing with representatives of the United Defence Front (the legal front-organisation for the banned ANC) and their discussions with other organisations in the Black National Forum (in some respects rather more extreme than the ANC in that they bar whites from membership in their revolutionary campaign).

How many Blacks truly support the ANC and its colleague organisations is hard to determine. John Kane-Berman, the widely respected director of the Institute of Race Relations, told me when I was in Johannesburg earlier this year that he did not believe the ANC, and its associates, would automatically carry a free election against other rival Black groups, even in the Townships where some ten million of South Africa's 24 million Blacks live.

Chief Buthelezi, leader of six million Zulus, frequently gets audiences three times as big in Soweto and elsewhere as those of Bishop Tuto, whe seems to be in cahoots with the ANC Chief Buthelezi is vigorously opposed to sanctions and violence ("we Blacks will be the victims"), although he wants Nelson Mandela released and the ANC unbanned to speed "negotiations for power-sharing" among South Africa's disparate groups. Taking into account the millions who live in the Homelands and the rural areas, it is unlikely that the ANC has the genuine support of more than a quarter to a fifth of the Blacks, giving them somewhat less than the combined total of Whites, Coloureds, and Asians at around 8½ million. However, intimidation by the ANC may well be increasing their outward support even if there were supposedly free elections, when many would assume that the ANC would surely find out how they voted and put a "necklace" around their necks if any informer shouted that they had voted "the wrong way." The reign of terror by informers is not very different from the "Law of Suspects" during the French Revolution. A lying informer can and does dispose of many of his personal rivals or political enemies by reporting them to the ANC's "Comrades."

I HOPE I HAVE ESTABLISHED that if the African National Congress were to be in a controlling position in the South Africa of the future, it would signal an end to any form of constitutional democracy or civil liberties as the West understands them. There would be no free press (and there is one now, aside from intermittent Emergency Regulations); no impartial courts; no chance of escape from a repressive Communist/Marxist state; to say nothing of the customary corruption, wreckage of the economy, and starvation operating in other Black states.

We have been here before. This is the future offered by those who gave us the show in Nkrumah's Ghana, Amin's Uganda, and Mengistu's Ethiopia. There would also be a cosy base for the Soviet Union to subvert the rest of Africa (and as much of the Western world as it can manage), from the strategic geographical position South Africa has, and from its possession of vital raw materials (e.g. 85% of the world's platinum). By the time that tragedy unfolded, eminently well-meaning liberal persons would have turned away from South Africa or "Azania" to some other noble cause by the adoption of which the West can commit slow suicide.

SO WHAT IS TO BE DONE? When I first went to South Africa to make a BBC *Panorama* television programme in 1957, I was horrified at what I saw of *apartheid*. Oppression and deprivation of the natural human rights of any groups—whether it is because of their colour, or for any other reason—outrages anyone with a sense of justice. South Africa was then deliberately reversing previous advances for the non-whites and making *apartheid* grimmer; and it proceeded to do so for almost the next 30 years.

I can only surmise that certain pigheaded idiots somehow thought that it was possible to have a stable régime of "separate development"—giving the non-whites in South Africa states to live in where they would be sovereign, and allowing them to work for the whites as foreign nationals in the richest areas where the whites would be sovereign and

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supreme. Modern industry and international commerce are just not like that. Nor would Blacks for ever accept the downgrading of their education, the humiliating Pass Laws (the absence of the necessary card on the person frequently meaning imprisonment and deportation); the restrictions on where they might live; the segregation in sport and public places; *ad nauseam*. If I had been a Black in South Africa, I suspect that I too might have become a revolutionary.

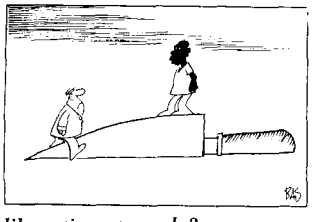
THE HUMANE INSTINCTS OF many South African whites were also aroused. Their pressure, combined with the growing comprehension of the National Party government that they had been conducting an exercise in futility, has brought about astonishing changes over the last year. There is now a tricameral parliament in which Asians and Coloureds, voted for by their communities, have more positive and blocking powers than they had expected. The Pass Laws have gone. All Blacks may travel and work as freely as the rest. Blacks may now set up businesses in town centres where they could not operate before. Mixed marriage (and sexual intercourse) across the races is legal; and it is not by any means always the case that if a white marries someone of another race they are compelled to live in the area designated for that race. The "Group Areas Act" is less and less enforced, as I found when I was in South Africa last February, and talked to several couples who live in "the wrong areas". Restaurants and hotels (including the smartest ones) are increasingly open to all races, though this is not compulsory.

When I walked the length of the racecourse near Johannesburg last winter, through a crowd of 14,000, at least half of them Black, I found no sign of any segregation whatever. Blacks mingled with whites in every stand and stood side-by-side drinking and eating, and figuring out their bets. The racecourse has no bar against non-whites being on its governing body, and its most popular member was Mr Maponya, a successful Black racehorse owner. The Blacks in the crowd were friendly and laughing even asking me for "tips." They cheered me at the end of the racing day when I was chosen to draw from the drum two tickets for the winners of substantial prizes. I heard no diminution of applause when one of the winners was white.

THE NOTION THAT South Africa is a cauldron of hatred is ludicrous. Blacks retain great goodwill for the whites, and even when unemployed are amazingly cheerful. It is the violence instigated by the ANC and its associates in the Black

Chief Buthelezi on the "Senseless Violence"

TO THE EDITOR OF **"The Guardian."**



SIR,—*Your reports from South Africa and Leaders about our country always cleverly skirt one point: do you approve of or condemn the violence by which blacks and whites are being most brutally murdered and maimed in the name of the liberation struggle?*

For many years I have observed that "The Guardian" finds little fault with the external mission of the ANC; I have the distinct impression that you view the ANC as a legitimate government in exile and the movement through which South Africa should hand over power to the people.

The fact that the policy of the ANC is to kill people is rarely highlighted.

DOES THIS MEAN **that "The Guardian" supports the armed struggle for liberation? That it supports the external mission which receives finance and arms from the Soviet Union and Eastern bloc?**

In South Africa at present blacks are killing blacks because the external mission of the ANC tells them to do so. It is the ANC's stated policy to make South Africa "ungovernable"; those who do not support the ANC must be "eliminated." I and other members of Inkatha are on its hit list. The BBC, in its regular transcript of world broadcasts, has this all documented.

INKATHA *is a national cultural liberation movement which denounces black-on-black violence and opposes disinvestment and sanctions. It believes it is not too late to negotiate genuine power-sharing, and calls for national reconciliation and a constitution acceptable to all South Africans.*

And yet you allege (Leader, July 1) that, as the political leader of the Zulu nation and president of Inkatha (with 1.3 million Zulu and non-Zulu members), I have a "credibility" problem because I call for the release of the imprisoned ANC leader, Dr Nelson Mandela.

I have a "credibility" problem because I eschew violence and call for black-white negotiations. I have a "credibility" problem because I will not support disinvestment and sanctions which will cause inhuman black suffering not only in South Africa but also in neighbouring black states.

THEN YOU DENOUNCE ME **as a "tribal" leader who operates a one-party state. You do not mention, however, that in our last elections non-Inkatha candidates stood, but were defeated; and that KwaZulu and Inkatha citizenship and membership is open to all blacks.**

The ANC (or even "The Guardian") does not have a monopoly on black anger. I have suffered as a black man in this country all my life. I am no government "stooge" and never will be. My forefathers fought British imperialism; today I am prepared to die for democracy, and I will not rest until apartheid is dead.

BUT I AM NOT *prepared to lead my people into a battle where they would be decimated. South Africa cannot and will not be liberated with the blood of children.*

Today, more than ever, negotiation and peaceful change is within our grasp. Whites, more than ever, are ready to negotiate. Nobody can say exactly when and how, but one thing I do know: senseless violence will not help our cause.

Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi

(Chief Minister of KwaZulu, President of Inkatha), Ulundi, South Africa

in THE GUARDIAN (*London*)

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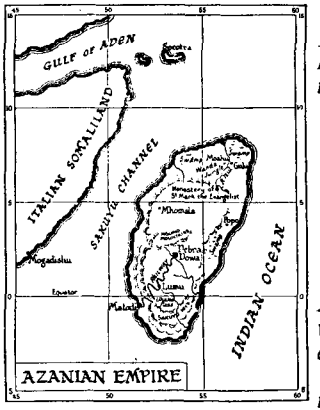
Townships which deliberately, and perhaps inevitably, promotes the ugly side.

A great deal of what one thought of as *apartheid* 30 years ago has now gone. Trade unions are legal and multi racial. Blacks are increasingly promoted to managerial positions. Even the Townships are not *all* hideous. The influx of Blacks from rural areas (plus two million illegal Black immigrants from the neighbouring countries where, alas, starvation is the rule) has obviously made something of a Third-World housing problem; it is only accentuated by the ANC's threat of death or other severe punishment to anyone who pays their rents. But there is much good housing—from Bishop Tutu's own large and luxurious house in Soweto (matched by others which would fetch half-a-million and upwards in Hampstead) down to small but reasonable and habitable houses, often built by self-help, with the aid of generous mortgages.

Disinvestment and Sanctions, unfortunately, hit Blacks first, and they have been causing more unemployment and real suffering and hardship. They also aid the ANC's cause in provoking the measure of anarchy in which despair and excitement act as a recruiting agency for the "revolution" the ANC want.

Evelyn Waugh & the Dream of "Azania"



AS READERS OF *Evelyn Waugh's novel "Black Mischief" (1932) may recall, the opening lines refer to:*

"Seth, Emperor of Azania, Chief of the Chiefs of Sakuyu, Lord of Wanda and Tyrant of the Seas, Bachelor of the Arts of Oxford University. . . ."

And from this point onwards, the memorable irony and satire never relent.

For some odd reason certain Black nationalists in South Africa must have missed the point of Waugh's savage joke. They ignored the fact that the portrait of "Azania" was intended to be a political farce. They even overlooked Waugh's little map (see above) of the Azanian Empire which clearly placed it between the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, roughly in the Horn of north-eastern Africa. Indeed, as the "Encyclopaedia Britannica" records, "AZANIA" was actually an Arabic name—the Arabs, the proficient slave-traders who sold off whole Negro populations to the White Man! Arabs, who referred to the coast of East Africa and the adjacent islands as "the Land of Zanj" (i.e. Land of the Blacks)!

No matter. The revolutionary élite of Black South Africa fell in love with Waugh's "Azania", and satire as well as geography be damned. According to the excellent study of South Africa by the "New York Times" correspondent Joseph Lelyveld, "Move Your Shadow" (1985), p. 339:

". . . the major theoretical contribution of the Pan-Africanist Congress, in an exile marked conspicuously by schisms, intrigue, and internecine murder, has been the suggestion of a new name for the country. . . . Azania is a historical and cultural misnomer, but now that it has been chiseled into Steve Biko's tombstone, it has taken on an undeniable authenticity for a generation of South African blacks. . . ."

What seems to have happened, in one of the great etymological moments of post-imperial history, is that Evelyn Waugh was approached by a PAC member in Algiers exile to inquire where he got the name he used for the African Kingdom in his novel "Black Mischief." Waugh replied drily—according to Lelyveld (and to the biographer of Patrick Duncan who acted as a literary go-between)—that:

"As you should know, it is the name of an ancient East African kingdom. . . ."

There was here "only a touch of his customary churlishness."

IN AN AMIABLE PROFILE OF **Oliver Tambo, exiled leader of the African National Congress, now resident in Lusaka (Zambia), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), and Muswell Hill (London), the "Sunday Times" reported (29 June 1986) that "despite his overt mildness, Tambo has not shirked from calling for violence"; that "he is more conservative and devoutly Christian than most of his colleagues"; that he remains confidently unconcerned about the number of Communists in his leadership and over the question of their basic loyalties; that "he does not relish the prospect of all-out war" ("I have no wish to celebrate liberation day surrounded by a desolate landscape of destroyed buildings"). We also learn that he relaxes in the evening by listening "to Beethoven and Strauss on his pocket tape-recorder before going to bed. . . ." Waugh would have been amused to note that African revolutionaries, as Tambo told the "Sunday Times" reporter, "still believe they will see out their old age in a free Azania, as the ANC would rename South Africa. . . ."**

MUCH HAS CHANGED *in Africa, and in Western attitudes to the "Dark Continent", in the half-century since Evelyn Waugh's "Black Mischief hair" was published. A fetish of vitamins is no longer so plausible, nor is a cannibalistic dénouement. But there are those who still feel that in his most churlish moments Waugh had caught more than a passing aspect of Azanian truth. In the following passage (Penguin ed.) Seth has been taking advice on the modernisation of his new military forces:*

"'I'll make out an order today. Of course they must have boots, I'll hang any man I see barefooted.'

'Fine. I thought you'd stand by us, Seth. You know', he added reflectively, 'we've got a much easier job now than we should have had fifty years ago. If we'd had to modernise a country then it would have meant constitutional monarchy, bi-cameral legislature, proportional representation, women's suffrage, independent judicature, freedom of the press, referendums. . . .'

'What is all that?' asked the Emperor.

'Just a few ideas that have ceased to be modern.'

Then they settled down to the business of the day."

Alas, the current ideas in the business of the day are in the spirit of a "thoroughly modern modernity", and amount to what Waugh would have felt to be a new neo-modern mischief.

M.J.L.

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The last great bastion of *apartheid* is the exclusion of Black votes and electoral power in the centre of government, though there is some such input locally. The problem is not dismantling conventional *apartheid*, but how to give Blacks genuine political power-sharing without throwing the new baby out with the old bath-water.

I TALKED TO President Botha in Cape Town, and thought him sincere. When he says that South Africa is composed of "many different minorities", he is right, however much the ANC deny it. For instance, the ANC Executive is dominated by the Xhosas. This tribe loathes the Zulus (and vice versa). Whichever got the upper hand might well try to exterminate the other, as Prime Minister Mugabe's forces have been massacring Joshua Nkomo's tribe in Zimbabwe. As has happened everywhere else in Africa, there are powerful tribes in South Africa who would not accept rule from a Communist-oriented Xhosa ANC without a great deal of fighting. The Zulus nearly beat the British and the Boers in the 19th century. My money would be on them in any fight against the Xhosas (normally a somewhat unwarlike race), provided that the Russians did not send the Xhosas "comradely arms", though that may be quite likely.

Similarly, nearly five million whites (or at least the major Boer part) would put up very strong resistance to any form of rule or imminent dictatorship by the ANC. The South African army and police (and these forces contain many loyal Black officers and men) are very powerful.

It is unrealistic to believe that sanctions could make South Africa succumb to international pressure for one-man-one-vote in a unitary state, or dissipate all resistance of whites and their supporters. If that is the "moral confrontation" the long-distance do-gooders succeed in forcing on the West, there would be systematic repression of a bloody kind by the Pretoria whites for the next 50 years or more. In any case, the sanctions would easily be broken. Neighbouring Mozambique, for instance, is already pressing South African businessmen to use their port of Maputo, nearer to Johannesburg than Durban, to break any sanctions there may be—and this despite semi-demi-Marxist Mozambique's apparent solidarity with the ANC.

I do not believe President Botha wants any violent confrontation or repression. The recent "State of Emergency" was felt to be unavoidable as a means of containing the riots organised (and so advertised) by the ANC to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 1976 Soweto riots. What President Botha wants is to work out a form of real "power-sharing" between the communities and tribes, which will leave the structure of South Africa intact, and prosperity growing, without any minority—whatever the colour—being excluded or oppressed. He has to nudge the National Party—and other Afrikaners, as well as the sizeable element of British origin—towards this concept while convincing non-coloured groups that they are getting a fair deal.

Raucous demands by the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and the European Economic Community that certain reforms should be achieved by a given date are, it seems to me, idiotic. President Botha has already offered a "National Statutory Council" in which all groups would take a part in governing the country and working out the new Constitution. He feels justified in having asked that anyone joining this Council should "renounce violence" while they are in it, a proviso which anywhere else than in South Africa would be thought quite normal.

Is it only President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher, among world leaders, who have any understanding of the difficulties which confront President Botha and the sincerity with which he is attempting to solve them? Why do the others sneer away, enjoying unthinking popular applause from the comfort of their far-distant residences? If they get their way in winning absolute power for the ANC, it will be too late for them subsequently to ask forgiveness for "not knowing what they did." Where will *they* be if disaster finally envelops South Africa?

IN VIEW OF OUR INDIFFERENCE to the murder, misery, torture, and imprisonment inflicted by governments on other peoples in most of the contemporary world, it is quite extraordinary that we single out South Africa as the one place where we have an irrepressible moral duty to interfere. It is, curiously enough, a kind of tribute to South Africa's adherence to "civilised values", even to democracy and justice—which, though far from being full or perfect, is manifestly capable of being expanded—that we think that what we say to South Africa may have more effect than if we said it to the usual run of Communist or Fascist dictatorship. But our interference, in my view, should be limited to cajoling and mildly threatening South Africa with moderate signs of displeasure, to persuade its white rulers that they must speed up the process of change not only for their own benefit but because it is right. We should help, and indeed push, South Africa into getting a real dialogue going in that "nation of minorities", as President Botha correctly describes it; but the political structure which evolves is for those minorities to agree with one another, and not for us to prescribe.

If they want to divide their country into seven regions with seven kings and seven assemblies in each, that, however odd and eccentric, is their affair and not ours. Nor have we any right to fix some date by which they must come to a conclusion on their Constitution. It may take three years or ten; it certainly cannot be a shotgun wedding of unwilling partners. The whites (among whom the substantial majority are Boers) have developed South Africa since 1650, beginning in the areas which had only tiny indigenous populations. Surely they have as much right to live in South Africa as any of the other marauding tribes they encountered and defeated, or were defeated by, as Black and White roamed around expanding their territories. Anyone who thinks that South Africa could afford the highest standard of living (even when they are unemployed) for Blacks anywhere in Africa without the ingenuity and industry of the Whites, is a fool. The Whites, as Chief Buthelezi has observed, are now ready to share power—but not to be a persecuted minority.

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DISCUSSION

What Helps Superpower "Star Wars" Stability?

Following on from the Charlton Series—By EDWARD TELLER

"THE MORE MEMBERS of the nuclear club, the greater the danger." If politics were a science, this widely accepted statement would be called a postulate. But this truism is not valid in connection with Britain and France. A first strike by either nation is unimaginable. Michael Charlton begins his excellent series of ENCOUNTER articles, "'Star Wars' or Peace-in-the-Skies" (February, March, April 1986), by stating that "if strategic defence were to become a Russian achievement, it would place a question mark against the present forces and philosophy of the smaller nuclear powers."

The fact that France and Britain have deterrent weapons continues to make Soviet aggression less likely. The value in this retaliatory potential does not depend on the size of such forces but on their independence. For me as an American to state these facts to a transatlantic European audience is probably unnecessary except as an assurance that this knowledge is mutually held.

If the Soviets could develop a completely effective defence against rockets, then the French and British nuclear deterrent forces would indeed lose their value. But a complete defence is completely impossible. To rely on such a defence would be even more completely absurd. West European independent retaliatory forces have a stabilising effect, and this will remain, for the foreseeable future, baseless.

Confusion about defence, so well represented in Charlton's three articles, is due to a misunderstanding about the competition in technology popularly referred to as "the Arms Race". It is generally assumed that, at least in technical expertise, the United States is always stronger than the Soviet Union. Indeed, Charlton quotes President Carter as saying:

> "We're almost always ahead of them in technological advances: miniaturisation of circuits; the dependability of solid-fuel rockets; guidance systems; accuracy; the MIRVing of missiles. We've always been ahead of them, almost always, in these areas. And we've always thought that our advantages would last five to ten years—and they've generally lasted from one to two years. The Soviets are quite quick in catching up. . . ."

President Carter does not mention the fact that *we* may have some catching up to do in defence. The fact is that the Soviets have worked on defence for at least two decades longer than we. Freud might say that this idea has been "repressed".

Harold Brown (former director of my favourite laboratory, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and Secretary of Defense under President Carter) is quoted in the same article. "When we build, they build—and when we don't build, they build." He would have been justified in adding, "And if a treaty is signed, they still build."

President Reagan's "Strategic Defence Initiative" (SDI) would have been more accurately described if it had been called the Strategic Defence Response. Soviet efforts on ballistic missile defence began in 1956 before *Sputnik* and the beginning of the rocket age. But the Soviet and American defence programmes differ in more than duration and current deployment. Advanced technology could make the defence of the free world more effective than the Soviet defensive system.

There is a significant difference between defence in the Communist world and defence in the West. The Soviet defences protecting Moscow may be extended over the entire Soviet Union, but they are not intended to be international. American defence, since its inception in March 1983, has been planned as a defence for all the nations of the world.

President Reagan has stated several times that any effective system would in the end be shared even with the Soviet Union. This statement should not be dismissed as "rhetoric". The proposal is not a dream but a vision based on a real prospect.

Rockets are most vulnerable during the acceleration or boost stage. Just how vulnerable that is was tragically demonstrated by the *Challenger* accident, where a small technical failure destroyed at this stage the entire shuttle and its seven astronauts. A single rocket can act as a bus for several warheads and many decoys. Therefore, destroying the rocket in the boost phase, before its components have separated, makes the job of defence much easier.

Defence against missiles has been described as "trying to hit a bullet with a bullet". But while rockets move fast, their speed in flight is roughly one hundred-thousandth of the velocity of light. Directed energy weapons, such as lasers,

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move at the speed of light. Such weapons have the further advantage that they can be aimed at a target more than 1,000 miles away, lead the target by a few dozen feet, and actually hit it. The rocket does not have time to change speed or direction while the laser-beam is on its way. Directed energy weapons appear to be an excellent form of defensive weapons. While no weapon is an "ultimate weapon", directed energy weapons are ultimate in speed.

THE 1964 NOBEL PHYSICS PRIZE was given for early laser work and went jointly to Charles Townes (an American who is now working on astrophysics) and to Nikolai Basov and Alexander Prokhorov (of the Soviet Union, who are now working on applications). The Soviets have one directed-energy research centre at Sary Shagan, a weapons-testing facility on the shore of Lake Balkash, where they have deployed a high-intensity ground-based laser. A recent report by the US Departments of State and of Defense estimates that the current Soviet laser research programme alone employs about 10,000 scientists and engineers. Several of the most innovative ideas for defensive weapons being explored under SDI had their origin in the open Soviet scientific literature of the 1970s. Subsequently, no further information on these topics has been published in the Soviet Union.

There is no need to deploy weapons *in space* in order to be able to attack rockets during the launching period. Ground-based lasers, able to defend against missiles fired from a distance of about 500 miles, may be ready for deployment in less than ten years. This range can be greatly extended by the use of mirrors able to redirect the laser beam; such mirrors could be popped up to the appropriate altitude at warning of attack.

IT IS MOST IMPORTANT to remember that in order to be effective, defence must be less expensive than the means to overwhelm or destroy it. At the present time, predeployment of defensive weapons in space appears to be more costly than the means to destroy such satellites. This fact, of course, has repercussions in terms of space observation satellites. When considering any defensive system, one should not produce further situations which might exacerbate a crisis and lead to an attack. We should try to prevent the destruction of launch observation capabilities, but we must not overreact if our space assets are attacked. Actually, rocket launchings, particularly the nearly simultaneous launching of many rockets, can be observed not only from space but also from the ground by means of long distance (over-the-horizon) radar. On the reception of such information, defence instruments can be activated or popped up within seconds. One of the great advantages of defence is the stability that it would provide—and the consequent lessening of international tensions and fears. In the event of a false alarm, a defensive response would harm no one. If the attack is real, defence would save uncounted lives.

At this time, it might be best to propose an agreement outlawing the mass launching of rockets.

It might be even better to make a specific proposal for an international treaty that rockets above a certain size should be inspected, before launching, for the presence of nuclear materials. Such an inspection can be made without opening the rocket if the rocket is irradiated and the response observed from a nearby location. If nuclear materials are present, the rocket should be opened and inspected to verify the absence of nuclear explosives. If the presence of an explosive is not eliminated by this procedure or a similar one, it should become legal to shoot down the rocket.

A treaty of this kind obviously would be verifiable and would provide the legal foundation for international rocket defence.

The President's vision of security based on defence could be carried out on an international scale much more easily than by an individual nation. When the technical means are available, mass launchings should be outlawed, whether they come from China, the Soviet Union, Luxembourg, or the United States. At this point, all the nations of the world would be asked to participate in defence. The responsibility as well as the required technology for defence would truly be shared by everyone.

In the last section of "'Star Wars' . . .", Charlton reports the former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's comment that "NATO has only one eye, when the popular prejudice runs in favour of two." This accurately observed handicap leads Schmidt to propose an independent European observation satellite. This is a splendid idea, and harmonious with the spirit of SDI. No one should believe what he does not see. But everyone should see what is dangerous for all of us.

The US has proposed that its friends and allies make a cooperative effort to provide strategic defence. The supporters of SDI in the USA take cooperation seriously, and they are willing to go ahead under a wide variety of conditions to be determined by the cooperating partner. The situation for cooperation between the European democracies is even simpler. If many rockets were launched in the East, it would be difficult to determine within a few seconds whether they would strike east or west of the Rhine. Defensive cooperation within Europe is not a political act; it is necessitated by physical facts.

THE INSTABILITIES AND DANGERS of the international situation can be avoided by cooperation. Cooperation in turn must be based on trust. On negotiations with the Soviet Union compared to European or transatlantic unity, I want to express a preference. An unwritten agreement based on common philosophy and historical facts is better than any written treaty between parties whose philosophies are diametrically opposed. If trust and cooperation develop beween countries of common background, then future written agreements with opponents will become more meaningful.

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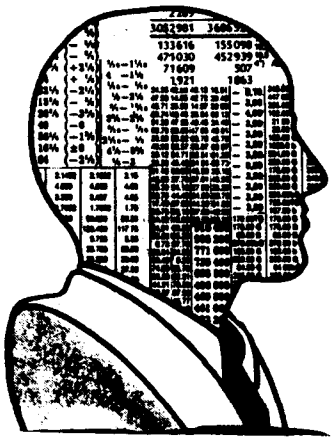
ECONOMICS

Can there be a British Economic Renaissance?

Alan Walters's Progress—By WALTER ELTIS



SIR ALAN WALTERS, who was Margaret Thatcher's personal economic adviser from 1981 to 1983, has published a book with the title *Britain's Economic Renaissance: Margaret Thatcher's Reforms 1979-84*.[1] Many British economists question whether there has in fact been a renaissance: 364 of them (including four Chief Economic Advisers to previous British governments) once signed a celebrated letter to *The Times* (31 March 1981) which included the prediction that:

> "Present policies will deepen the recession, erode the industrial base of our economy and threaten its social and political stability. . . ."

In the five years since the publication of that forecast, Britain's real gross domestic product has risen 13%; industrial production has increased 14%; and productivity in British manufacturing has grown 25%. The increases in output in the cyclical recoveries during the Premierships of Edward Heath (when the National Product rose 12%) and Sir Harold Wilson and James Callaghan (when it rose 13%) were similar—but there are important differences.

Industrial productivity has risen some 10 to 15 percentage points faster in 1981-86 than in 1971-74 and 1976-79, which has meant that the growth opportunities now open to Britain are far greater than in the past. But, because output has risen no more than in the previous recoveries, the extra-rapid rise in labour productivity has been associated with a 10% decline in industrial employment. However, the Thatcher recovery is continuing and it may well have several more years to run, so the extensive opportunities to raise output which this exceptional productivity growth now offers may actually be realised. The Heath and Callaghan recoveries ended, after a mere three years, in accelerating inflation and a need for consequent corrective action which made an early recession inevitable.

The previous cyclical recoveries offered far faster initial growth than that achieved by Mrs Thatcher, conservatively advised by Sir Alan Walters and Sir Terence Burns (who has been Chief Economic Adviser to the Treasury and head of the Government's Economic Service since 1979). But it was precisely the extra-rapid growth of demand which previous policies involved that undermined their continuation. Thus, in the Heath boom, the national income grew 6% a year for two years—after which expansion petered out, inflation shot up, and the balance of payments moved into massive deficit. In the Callaghan recovery, output was growing at an annual rate of almost 5% by 1978-79 while the growth of "narrow money" (M1) had been allowed to expand to 15%, and inflation, which had been briefly reduced to 8%, was rising towards 13%.

The more expansionist policies which were pursued under the advice of Sir Alan Walters's predecessors fed unsustainable expansion rates into the economy, and businesses entirely understood that corrective action by the government to kill growth would inevitably follow. They therefore had insufficient time and only a modest inducement to adjust their investment and real capital stock upwards to enable them to take advantage of the more expansionist environment which Whitehall was briefly creating.

In contrast, in the present recovery output has been expanding at a stable and sustainable rate of between 2½% and 3½%; and this can continue indefinitely in the absence of external shocks. Companies which are now earning record profits have more than ample financial resources, and they can afford to increase greatly their investment and research and development spending, which should all the time increase their ability to win new export markets. The previous more inflationary expansions were extremely helpful to *imports*—because the extra demand the Government generated just could not be satisfied by home producers within the time-span available. Thus, from 1972 to 1973, when the real national income rose at an unsustainable 7½% per annum, the volume of imports of manufacturers increased no less than 20%. In contrast, in 1985, during which the national income rose at a sustainable 3½% rate, imports of manufacturers rose just 5%.

A further and perhaps the principal explanation for the potential durability of the Thatcher recovery is the increasing

[1] *Britain's Economic Renaissance: Margaret Thatcher's Reforms 1979-84*. By ALAN WALTERS. Oxford University Press, £19.50.

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financial stabilisation which has accompanied it. Since early 1981, when expansion recommenced, inflation has fallen from 8.7% to 2½%. At the same time the Budget deficit has been reduced from 5¼% of the national income to less than 2%.

SIR ALAN WALTERS SETS OUT precisely why he believes the demand-expansion-biased policies of his predecessors were based on mistaken assumptions, so that they achieved less overall growth in the end. The most important part of the book is his intellectual assault on the high borrowing which was such an important element in the Keynesian policies which were pursued in the past (and which are still being followed in a good deal of the non-Communist world).

Opposition to recent British policy has centred on the Thatcher Government's overriding insistence on reducing the "Public Sector Borrowing Requirement" (PSBR), which has limited the support it could give to job-creating and welfare-enhancing public expenditure, and which forced far higher taxation on to average earners. It was the belief that the PSBR had to be reduced that caused Sir Geoffrey Howe, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, to raise taxation by 3% of the national income in the 1981 Budget, while the economy was in deep recession; and it was precisely this that persuaded Walters's critics to sign the *Times* letter in their hundreds.

WALTERS HIMSELF REGARDS Professors Willem Buiter (of the London School of Economics and Yale) and Marcus Miller (of the University of Warwick) as his most distinguished critics; and he concentrates his assault on higher-deficit policies on their well-known calculations, in the belief that if they can be disposed of, so necessarily will all the others.

Buiter and Miller have argued that, when corrections are made for the influence of both the business cycle and price inflation on the Budget deficit, Britain has actually been running large Budget surpluses—with the result that the tendency of government policy has been to severely depress the economy.[2]

As an economy moves into recession, tax revenues decline because unemployed workers and depressed companies cease to pay taxes. Public expenditure is boosted by the increased cost to the government of supporting the unemployed. Milton Friedman is among those who once advocated that governments should take these developments into account and should only seek to balance the hypothetical Budget that would be experienced at current tax rates when the economy is at full employment.[3] Governments should be prepared to acquiesce in high deficits when there is substantial unemployment, for these will then act as automatic stabilisers which will boost demand when the economy is depressed.

The Thatcher Government adopted the opposite strategy in 1981. It reduced the Budget deficit as the economy moved into recession, so that it was actually following a policy of "cyclical destabilisation." According to Buiter and Miller's calculations, the Public Sector financial balance, which *apparently* improved by 2.2% of the national income in the Thatcher Government's first three years, *actually* improved by 6.7% once the cyclical factors are taken into account. As the apparent PSBR was approximately 3½% of the national income in 1981-82, a true deficit of 4½ percentage points less than this meant that the Government was running a "cyclically corrected" Budget surplus of 1% of the national income. By 1983-84, on their calculations, the Government had tightened the Budget by no less than 5½% of the national income on a cyclically adjusted basis.

WALTERS'S RESPONSE is to emphasise the consequences of the policies which he presumes Buiter and Miller were advocating: namely, that nominal government borrowing should have been allowed to increase by no less than 5½% of the national income by 1983-84.

> "This would have meant an increase of the budget deficit over the years 1980-83 of 5.5%. This additional deficit, added to the percentage of financial deficit of 1979 (or indeed 1980), would have produced a deficit for 1983 of about 9 or 10% of GDP. Presumably, the authors would not wish to rely merely on the built-in stabilisers, but would, in principle, wish to pursue additional counter-cyclical spending and tax remission programmes which would drive the deficit even higher, producing a positive fiscal stimulus to combat the slump. So we may safely take it that 10% is the lower limit of their ambitions. . . ."

Walters believes, and many with a detailed experience of financial markets will concur, that government borrowing of *at least* 10% of the national income would have led to funding difficulties in the City of London—as insurance companies and pension funds failed to absorb all this debt at the interest rates the government sought to maintain. That would have led (as it actually did in the 1970s) to repeated "buyers' strikes" in the City, with the result that the authorities would have been unable to fund any debt for months at a time. In such periods the deficit is necessarily "monetised", with the result that the money supply rises very quickly indeed for months on end. But several Keynesian economists would actually welcome this. For they believe, and their textbooks seek to demonstrate, that any amount of government debt can be marketed without adverse effects on interest rates, provided that the authorities finance the deficit through "a balanced expansion of cash and bonds." The extra cash persuades the public to hold the necessary quantity of extra bonds as well, at unchanged interest rates.

Walters simply does not believe that the City of London would have absorbed the enormous quantities of Government Bonds and Treasury Bills which a government advised by Buiter-Miller would have had to sell. And he believes

[2] Walters refers most frequently to Willem H. Buiter and Marcus H. Miller, "Changing the Rules: Economic Consequences of the Thatcher Régime", *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* (No. 2, 1983). They have, of course, written other important articles.

[3] Milton Friedman, "A Monetary and Fiscal Framework for Economic Stability", *American Economic Review* (Vol. 38, June 1948).

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that if the pill had been sugared with a parallel *balanced expansion of the money supply*, inflation would have accelerated, and the balance-of-payments and sterling would have collapsed in precisely the manner experienced in the 1970s when such policies were followed. All this would rapidly have led to the forced reversal of the high-deficit policies.

If, in contrast, the deficit had been allowed to rise to 10% of the national income and money had been tightly controlled at the same time, nominal interest rates would have had to rise enormously to finance a Budget deficit of these dimensions. Ireland and Italy have sustained such deficits, together with the high interest rates necessary to finance them; but these have greatly weakened the private sectors of the Italian and Irish economies.

BUITER AND MILLER have also argued that Budget deficits should be corrected for inflation. This is permissible, in their view (and that of many others, including distinguished economists in the Bank of England), because inflation all the time reduces the real value of the national debt, so that governments can borrow large nominal sums without in the end owing more in real terms. Miller has estimated that in the three years 1979, 1980, and 1981, inflation reduced the real value of British public debt by between £30.5 and £37.6 billion (depending on the precise method of estimation used).[4]

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The public sector borrowed £35.1 billion in these three years, but at the same time inflation was reducing the real value of what it owed previously by no less than £30 to £37 billion, with the result that *net* public sector borrowing was approximately zero. So the British authorities were in effect running a balanced Budget in 1979-81. This is the Budget without any correction for the cycle; if that also made a difference of 5½ percentage points, then the underlying British Budget was in surplus by perhaps 5% of the national income by 1981. That calculation underlines the case for fiscal reflation which Buiter and Miller make.

WALTERS'S RESPONSE is again a practical one. He applies their calculations to the great inflation of 1974-75 when the *nominal* Budget deficit was 10% of Britain's national income, and the inflation rate was over 20%. Because of this rapid inflation, which reduced the real value of previously incurred debt by about 20%, the Budget—*corrected for inflation*—was in surplus by 3% of the national income. Walters continues:

> "Clearly, the weight of Keynesian budget advice would be, at least, to turn these corrected surpluses into balance—and perhaps into corrected deficits. But in the circumstances of 1974 and 1975 this policy would have produced a massive funding crisis (i.e., more catastrophic than those that *did* occur), and much of the increase in the deficit would have been monetised and, some months later, added to the inflation rate. This would have produced then a larger (corrected) surplus, which would require, on these principles of policy, to be offset by more tax cuts and public expenditure. It is possible to formulate a familiar set of conditions where explosions are possible. But it would be unprofitable to explore any further what is patently an absurd policy."

Buiter and Miller would have been far too sensible to advocate expanding the 10% Budget deficit of 1975 still further; but that was indeed what the logic of their theoretical calculations called for. And if these would have given the wrong answer in 1975, can it truly be assumed that they would necessarily have pointed budgetary policy in a superior direction in 1981?

A footnote to the inflation correction of deficits is provided by a debate in Trinity College, Dublin, in 1982, in which I participated, together with a distinguished British academic economist who believed in the inflation-correction of deficits. My British colleague showed the Irish Cabinet Minister and Shadow Minister (who were also taking part in the debate) detailed calculations which demonstrated that the Irish Budget, although apparently in deficit by 13% of the national income, was actually almost in balance because Ireland's 17% inflation rate was so massively reducing what the Irish government already owed.

Those responsible for Ireland's finances may have taken

[4] Marcus Miller, "Inflation-Adjusting the Public Sector Financial Deficit", in John Kay (ed.), *The 1980 Budget* (1982).

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this kind of calculation more seriously than Margaret Thatcher's Ministers; for Ireland's Budget deficit is still over 12% of the national income, and total Irish government debt has now been allowed to grow to more than *107%* of the national income. The result is that today Irish governments have to borrow more than 10% of their national income merely to pay interest to those who have already lent to them. This 10% of borrowing to pay debt interest (which exceeds what Britain spends on Health plus Education) makes no kind of productive contribution to the Irish economy; and it perpetually threatens to undermine financial markets.

OTHER CHAPTERS in Walters's book are concerned with policy to control the money supply and the exchange rate, and what he has to say should be read with close attention by the economics profession and by those in government who have to decide whether to use or to ignore the economics that so many of us learned in the 1950s and '60s.

Economists who read him carefully will find strong arguments in support of the view that monetary policy is now more powerful than fiscal policy on both sides of the Atlantic. Walters believes that the evidence which has emerged in the 1970s and 1980s indicates that fiscal expansionism even failed to produce faster short-term rates of economic growth. It led, therefore, to financial destabilisation without significantly benefiting output and employment, even in the short term. Walters's evidence indicates that businessmen began to respond by raising *prices* rather than output *wherever they believed a fiscal impetus would not last.* Monetary expansion, in contrast, had a powerful and rapid influence on output *and* prices; so it is vitually important to keep the rate of growth of the money supply under control.

It would be interesting to know Walters's reaction to the recent total loss of control of the British monetary authorities over "broad money" (£M3). It grew by over 16% in 1985-86 and is actually *targeted* to grow by up to 15% in 1986-87. Walters believes "narrow money" (M0 and retail M1) is more important; and this is growing very slowly indeed. But his apparent indifference to the rate of growth of "broad money", which includes bank deposit (or saving) accounts, is puzzling, because this can all be turned into "narrow money" (immediately spendable current accounts) within a week or less.

THOSE WHO ARE SCEPTICAL about the success of the economic policies of the Thatcher Government will undoubtedly question his reaction to the continuing rise in unemployment in Britain.

He includes a table which shows that, from 1980 to 1983, British unemployment rose no more than the EEC average; but since 1983 British unemployment has continued to rise (by a further 1% of the labour force), while in OECD countries as a whole unemployment has fallen by more than 0.5%. If Britain is truly enjoying an economic renaissance, how can it be that unemployment is still rising? Walters has little to say to explain this continuing failure. He is merely convinced that the former Keynesian policies would have left unemployment much as it is or worse.

It can perhaps be concluded that Alan Walters and Terence Burns have helped to establish a sound financial framework within which British businessmen and workers may, or may not, begin to solve the economy's fundamental structural problems. There would be little hope of a long-term solution without the financial stability they contributed—because as soon as British business began to find the right answers, government would be jumping around to "correct" the crises that Keynesian deficits were producing.

Walters's stable financial framework merely provides one precondition which makes a British economic renaissance possible. It has not happened yet, but maybe it will.

Dry Farming

What do I measure, what do I sing?
Sing the heart's seizure, the fall
Of a king, so what if it's
Been sung before. So has the handicapped
Man waiting for traffic to thin, so has
The close at hand, the ode
To a safety pin. Or sing
The spread virus, the song everyone
Knows, ripped city buses and house full
Matinée shows. But if song
Dies in the tongue and all known methods
Fail, remember books, the other
Land, the double of the world
Outside, and to the terror
Of an unspoilt sheet
Bring the joy of *A Reader's Guide.*

Arvind Krishna Mehrotra

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RELIGION

Church Politics, Again

An Ungodly Muddle

By Antony Flew

THREE YEARS AGO, a team of fifteen Christian economists and sociologists was commissioned (by Digby Anderson, Director of the Social Affairs Unit) to produce *The Kindness That Kills: The Churches' Simplistic Response to Complex Social Issues* (SPCK, 1984). The resulting studies of 24 pronouncements which had been issued in the name of various Church organisations assailed these documents as:

> "sloppy, ill thought-out, ignorant, one-sided, addicted to secular fashions, uncritical of conventional 'progressive' wisdom, hysterical . . . and, most deplorable, uncharitable to those who disagree."

Although one clerical reviewer did remark that the authors of what are presented as Christian political proclamations appeared to find their inspiration in the overflowing opinion columns of *The Guardian* rather than in the Bible, no one, it seems, directly challenged the Christian credentials of any of these conventionally "progressive" documents. Presumably the modestly Christian contributors to *The Kindness That Kills* were inhibited by an authentically Christian charity, while other reviewers—like most of our contemporaries—were largely indifferent to (or ignorant of) religious doctrine.

Professor Julius Gould ("Theologians in the Political Mêlée: On Relevant Churchmen", ENCOUNTER, June) has already shown that *Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation*[1] is open to all the objections previously urged against the other 24 documents. This "Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas" (UPAs) does at one point hint that the Commission had heard the title of the earlier critique. But they took not the slightest notice of its contents.

Faith in the City was on its first appearance dismissed, unread, by certain Conservative MPs as "a Marxist production." Those MPs were certainly mistaken. Yet their suspicions were not foolish, for at that time the British Council of Churches—in a campaign generously financed by a registered charity calling itself "Christian Aid"—had as its sole message for travellers on the London Underground a summons to pray that the Marxist-Leninist régime in Nicaragua be left to consolidate its hold in peace. (There was, significantly, no corresponding call for similar spiritual support for the still more harassed but Christian-Democratic government of El Salvador.)

In fact there is in the nearly 400 pages of *Faith in The City* only one reference to Marx or to Marxism. This (p. 51) is a grotesque genuflexion towards

> "Marx's perception . . . also found to a notable degree in the Old Testament (from which, in fact, Marx may have derived it) . . . of the inevitable tendency of the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer unless some constraint is imposed. . . ."

We have here, of course, the crucial and notorious Immiseration Thesis; a thesis which Marx himself, even before he published *Capital*, had come to know to be unsound. Thus in the first edition of *Capital* various available British statistics are given up to 1865 or 1866, but those for the movement of wages stop at 1850. In the second edition all of the other runs are brought up to date, but that of wage movements still stops at 1850.[2]

It is significant that throughout the entire Report there are no quotations either from the Bible or from any other traditionally acknowledged source of Christian authority. This sustained indifference should surely suggest that, for some Commissioners at least, the object of the exercise was not to tease out the true applications for Britain today of Biblical teachings, but rather to recruit ecclesiastical support for prejudicially adopted, partisan conclusions. Such suspicions can only be strengthened once we observe the Commission's resolute and systematic refusal to quote, examine, or even mention any arguments of a kind which *Guardian* readers, and others, are taught to rate and reject as "right-wing" or conservative.

TO APPRECIATE THE GROUNDS for this suspicion we need to recognise that all rational persons pursuing any objectives whatsoever must necessarily be concerned to monitor their success or failure in these pursuits; and, if and when results prove unsatisfactory, show themselves ready and willing to adopt alternative, more promising means.

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[1] *Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation.* Report of the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S COMMISSION on Urban Priority Areas. Church House Publishing (Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1), £7.50. *The Popular Version of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Report.* Christian Action (308 Kennington Lane, London SE11), £1.00.

[2] This was, I think, first pointed out by Bertram D. Wolfe in his *Marxism: One Hundred Years in the Life of a Doctrine* (1965), pp. 322-3.

It was, surely, because Engels was so right in his insistence in the second part of his obituary speech that his late friend had been before all else a revolutionary that he was so wrong to conclude the first part with the claim: "*So war dieser Mann der Wissenschaft.*" For a less uncritical comparison of Marx with Darwin, see my *Darwinian Evolution* (Granada Paladin, 1984).

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It is this open-minded, flexibly critical concern which the Archbishop's Commission very conspicuously lacks. Instead of first attending to evidence of the success or failure of their preferred policies and agendas, and then considering possible alternative means to secure their professed ends, they prefer to insinuate that all reluctance to agree with their recommendations has to spring from a heartless and greedy repudiation of impeccably just and compassionate values. But, on the contrary, it is the Commission's blinkered and uncurious, not to say bigoted, woodenness which cannot but suggest a commitment to preferred policies (and, perhaps, a detestation of the persons opposing them) much stronger than any commitment to actually achieving the professed objectives of those policies.

FOR EXAMPLE: the Commission's chief call to "Church and Nation" is for a massive increase in public expenditure, mainly for the purpose of reducing unemployment. Yet nowhere does it try to deal with the anti-Keynesian argument that such measures eventually, and with progressively increasing rapidity, result in both escalating inflation and still higher "natural" levels of unemployment. (To ease this argument's way into some conspicuously unlively minds, let it be remembered that it was propounded, if only briefly—and then hurriedly revoked, as disaster loomed—by Prime Minister Callaghan at the 1976 Labour Party Conference, and was later accepted, more persistently and permanently, by President Mitterrand and the French Socialist Party.) The Commission's chosen method of evasion is to refer darkly and distantly to unnamed and unquoted adopters of "a dogmatic and inflexible economic stance" and to "the emergence of a new form of economic determinism in public policy."

The Commission's refusal to examine or even to cite objections or proposals conventionally perceived and condemned as "Right-wing", and its consequent readiness to sacrifice professed values to this eschewing, is most manifest in the more particular treatments of Social Work, Housing, and Education. Thus, the Commissioners speak reverently of "social work training" leading to "professional qualification". Since they apparently relied for their information, or disinformation, exclusively on the social-work Establishment it is perhaps not surprising that they took no account of the forcefully argued charge that what is currently dispensed under this rubric is, in large part, worthless or even harmful.[3]

Next, Chapter 10—"Housing"—deplores both the increasing shortage of accommodation available for rent and, most eloquently, the powerlessness of people too poor to afford a decent home. It also notices both the projected continuing increase in single-person households and the precipitous decline in the private rented sector. Observing its indebtedness to Professor David Donnison, we should not be surprised that the Commission has no time for realistic explanations: for instance, that this decline has been due primarily to increasingly ferocious rent controls; or that at least the single-person problem might in large part be solved both simply and cheaply by a credibly irrevocable repeal of "the 1974 Rent Act . . . giving unlimited security to the tenant."

BY THE TIME the Commissioners come to Education (Chapter 13), they have quite forgotten their eloquent professions of compassion for the powerless and choiceless poor. For they cannot bring themselves even to whisper the words "education vouchers." Yet this idea—first suggested by Tom Paine and J. S. Mill, and more recently revived by Milton Friedman, Arthur Seldon, and other conservative reformers—has an almost irresistible appeal to all of us who really want to extend power over and choice in their children's education to all concerned and harassed parents.[4]

The Commission's determination to look always, and only, towards the Left might sometimes be comic were it not so often damaging to its own professed objectives. For instance, it likes the suggestion of "a basic income . . . paid to all residents automatically, irrespective of their income from employment", a suggestion here attributed only to "the Basic Income Research Group." The Commission is careful not to employ the expression "negative income tax", for that would be bound to recall the hated name of Milton Friedman—who is, as all Left-liberals know, a capitalist lackey paid to defend greed and heartlessness.

BY NOW ENOUGH has been said to show that *Faith in the City* cannot plausibly be presented as a sincere and open-minded attempt to discover presently relevant implications of Biblical teaching. What, then, of the Commissioners' grasp upon, and engagement with, Christian fundamentals? Anyone raised, as I myself was, in a thoroughly traditional, robustly evangelical, Christian home is bound to be put on guard by seeing the respect accorded to the crypto-Leninism of "Liberation Theology." (This is the only kind of theology, genuine or supposed, which the Commission thus dignifies with initial capital letters.)

In my father's generation, instructed Christians would have rejected the whole business out of hand. Indeed I can "hear" him now—saying that, just as Christian Science is neither Christian nor science, so "Liberation Theology" has no more to do with God than with liberty. (It is, I would add myself, a fit product of an age in which the media regularly describe as "freedom-fighters" guerrillas striving to establish irreversible revolutions on behalf of irremovable Marxist-Leninist despotisms.)

The trouble begins with what, in those more confident and assertive days of my youth, truly believing Christian apologists used to describe as "the scandal of particularity." The crux is that the distinctive, essential, defining doctrine of the Christian religion is the claim that God—the Mosaic God

[3] Compare Colin Brewer and June Lait, *Can Social Work Survive?* (Maurice Temple Smith, 1980). See also the critique of "the social-work ideology" in Roy Kerridge's account, written with remarkably controlled fury: "Death of a Child" (ENCOUNTER, June).

[4] See my *Power to the People!* (Centre for Policy Studies, 1983).

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of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—somehow became Man at one particular time and in one particular place on Planet Earth. The recorded teachings and the alleged Resurrection of this man—Jesus bar Joseph, born a Jew, who lived and died among Jews in Roman-occupied Israel—therefore constitute and authenticate a unique Revelation.

The Commissioners, in their one systematically theological chapter, labour to escape the embarrassment of this scandal. Presumably—since they make no similarly forthright statements of fundamental Christian belief, it is hard to be sure—they are at a loss to reconcile this conviction with the supposed demands of life in a multi racial society; a society produced by what they delicately describe as "the arrival in our cities of large numbers of adherents of other faiths."

Here they carelessly increase their difficulties by following the muddled (or mischievous) militants of the race-relations industry. They both abuse the word "blacks" to embrace all non-whites and collapse the distinction between ethnicity and culture. This involves not only blinding themselves to the fact that levels of achievement vary as between different non-white groups, thus making it impossible—as they would wish (pp. 320 ff.)—to attribute poor Afro-Caribbean educational performance to (always exclusively white) "racism"; but also—since they, rightly, reject all advantaging or disadvantaging on the basis of racial-group membership—their feeling that they have to maintain that all cultures are equally good for equally "valid". This, presumably, is the point of their insisting, without explanation, that "schools must be sensitive to, *and affirm*, the cultures" of all pupils indiscriminately (p. 305; my emphasis).

HAVING FIRST ADMITTED that "Only a tendentious reading of the gospels can suggest that Jesus was primarily a social reformer, let alone a violent revolutionary", the Commissioners then go on, with no apparent anxiety about consistency, to advocate state initiatives rather than individual conversions as their Church's chosen instruments of improvement. The Commissioners appear to reach their cherished collectivist conclusions by way of sloppily phrased yet grossly false assertions—seeking the salvation of individual souls with consequent improvements in individual conduct is, they think, some sort of Cartesian aberration (pp. 50-51). Have none of them ever read any of the writings or biographies of Luther or St Augustine, of Thomas à Kempis or St Ignatius?[5]

They trendily observe various intellectual fashions "such as structuralism", and concede that "Christian preaching can no longer rely on a conscious and shared inheritance of Christian concepts and language." The Commissioners seek "a theology that is truly relevant to the needs and aspirations of people today." They believe that "that old-time religion, good enough for Paul and Silas", the Faith of the Saints and the Fathers, is outmoded, élitist, even—dare one suggest it?—middle-class. It will never play in Peoria, or pull in the proles of Poplar.

IT SEEMS, TOO, that "people today", or at any rate these Commissioners, have little use for either deduction (p. 62) or consistency (pp. 63 to 68). They nevertheless assure their readers that "none of this must be thought of as a flight from reason" (p. 65). Does one have to spell out for them the most elementary and necessary truths: that "deduction" is defined in terms of the avoidance of self-contradiction; and that unconcern about consistency is unconcern about truth?

When they explain how this new, "truly relevant" theology is to be generated, their specifications escape "the scandal of particularity" by failing to require that it should be either Christian or even a theology. For they affirm:

> "Such a theology would start, not from a conventional academic syllabus of Christian knowledge or biblical study, but from the personal experience, the modes of perception and the daily concerns of local people themselves—priorities which might well be different from those of people of a more intellectual background."

In those now remote days when for me home was with a parent wholeheartedly and unreservedly dedicated both to genuinely theological enquiry and to preaching the particular Gospel of Jesus as both God and the Christ, official Church pronouncements were customarily called "expressions of the Mind of the Church." If *Faith in the City* is indeed faithfully representative (and its recent acceptance by the Synod suggests that it is), then I have to say that that mind today is not only at best second class, but also at most no more than very doubtfully and precariously Christian.

[5] Cf. my father's well-known work in the history of religion: R. N. Flew, *The Idea of Perfection in Christian Theology* (1934).

Pansies

Some blindness they face into asks for touch
As Jane Eyre asked Mr Rochester
To memorise her face and grant her that
Smoke would do as well as blackener.

Indeed he thought Jane's brow so conscience-struck
Its lines so fine, her heart so well enclosed
Might not her eyes have wished the grief of fire
To free these great dark shadows which the pansies have.

Elizabeth Smither

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Visiting Old Familiar Places

"At home", in a familiar place,
Say Norwich Market Place, or Orford,
King's College Chapel, or on Hampstead Heath:
We feel the scene reflects us. I suppose
The young feel this, gladdening upon the scene.

Age teaches otherwise: the place is robbed
Of all acquaintanceship, it knows us not.
The last time you were here the Earth in space
Was several million miles away, and now
There is no particle, no minuscule of dust
Remaining here that can connect you.
Each time you come, you come as you came first,
And there is no glad ghost of the child you were,
Meeting your mother, feeding the family,
Tormented by sad images, or running round
Wild in the morning with an infant child.

What seems familiar is mere hostile blankness.
A grave mistake, to be led by your memories
To well-remembered spots, as though
Continuous time of consciousness could be imposed
Upon the world that rolls away, in its brute time
Indifferent to eye or mind, or this
Bewildered self that seeks such recognition!

David Holbrook

Cormorant At Brighton Marina

The huge bird roots himself
On a plank of wood
Flapping his dragon wings.

He is a separate dream
Amongst resting ships
Telling no one his nightmares.

We walk here, under cliffs,
At the year's ending
Feeding on sun and wind,

Startle to see him there again:
A greedy question mark,
The black ghost of a wave,

In this cocoon maze of the sea.

Lotte Kramer

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LETTERS

Bogdanor's "Europe"

FRIEDRICH BUND's letter [ENCOUNTER, June] referring to the article by Vernon Bogdanor on "Europe" has the characteristic qualities of a Heidelbergian sabre thrust. It scars the argument when he says Dr Bogdanor's statement, "The consciousness of being 'European' is, so it would appear, primarily a 20th-century phenomenon" is absurd. I am quite sure that Dr Bogdanor needs no defence by me, but what he says is quite correct.

Of course, Europeans of the eminence of Erasmus and More (the latter surprisingly missing from Friedrich Bund's list), of Goethe and Schiller, *et al.*, understood, debated, and valued the concept of "European consciousness" as much as they debated and valued the contribution of Judaism to that consciousness. I am equally certain that until 1914 the overwhelming majority of Europeans would have understood that term—if they knew of it at all—as referring to a geographical location in which their nations had a place. The "consciousness", if it existed at all, was principally concerning an inheritance acquired from Greece, Rome, and the Holy Land. For us now, it is about a political and economic relationship which is of urgent importance to those nations occupying the geographical location called Europe, and demands to be considered as worthy of "a larger European attitude and loyalty."

I don't think that Dr Bogdanor needs to waste any time rethinking the old Oxonian problem of appearances and realities; it is for Friedrich Bund to make the effort to understand the realities behind the appearances.

REUBEN WHEELER

Exeter
Devon

I AM MOST GRATEFUL for Friedrich Bund of Heidelberg's extremely generous comments (ENCOUNTER, June 1986) on my article on "Europe" in the April issue. I fear, however, that he has misinterpreted my opening sentence that "The consciousness of being 'European' is, so it would appear, primarily a 20th-century phenomenon." I am, of course, perfectly well aware that there is, as Herr Bund says, a European tradition of at least a thousand years, emphasised by the late Denis de Rougemont and others. Indeed, my next sentence but one mentions Burke and Saint-Simon, while yet concluding that "these prophets were hardly characteristic of their age."

The point of what *I* was saying is that, before the 20th century, consciousness of being European was largely confined to writers and thinkers such as Herr Bund mentions. It was not until recent times that this consciousness became wide and deep enough to sustain a practical political agenda of European unity; and this, in my view, was fundamentally a product of the sense of vulnerability felt by those living in what remained of free Europe after the Second World War.

So, while thanking Friedrich Bund for his courteous suggestion that I should have deleted my opening sentence, I should like to assure him that I chose my words carefully—especially the word "primarily"—and that I stick by what *I* said.

VERNON BOGDANOR

Brasenose College
Oxford

Pearce & Magic

AGAIN we get brilliant confusion from Edward Pearce ("All the Queen's Men", June), who speaks as Gonzalo supporting the notions of "A republic of free men . . . no priesthood . . . and no irrational cult intrudes" . . . all, all "without reference to magic."

Renaissance, yes, hardly Enlightenment, whose most successful lasting product is the United States of America, which opted for an Elected King, and is the last effective stronghold of Monarchy.

The old black magic persists.

EDWARD J. SLOANE

London

Nora Beloff & Yugoslavia

MY REAPPRAISAL of forty years of Communist rule in Yugoslavia—which has left that country with the highest unemployment, the fastest rate of inflation, and the heaviest per-capita hard currency indebtedness of any country in Europe—has been criticised by your reviewer Mr Christopher Cviić (April) as excessively black-and-white. Mr Cviić has every right to his own opinion and would certainly not claim to speak for anyone but himself. But the Belgrade fortnightly *Duga*, which has joined the slanderous campaign being waged against me by the Yugoslav press, has erroneously identified the reviewer and the review. Thus, surely for the first time in your journal's history, ENCOUNTER is being cited in the defence of a one-party, collectivised state, arraigned, in this case, for its manifest incapacity to make proper use of Yugoslavia's great human and material potential.

If Yugoslavia had a free press I would, of course, defend myself in the columns of *Duga* but as this is forbidden I have written to the Press Officer of the British Embassy in Belgrade, asking him to give the Editor of *Duga* a list of factual errors about the content of the book and also to correct the wildly inaccurate assertion that my book *Tito's Flawed Legacy* passed unnoticed until it was reviewed in ENCOUNTER (eight months after its publication).

On the contrary, I challenge anyone to find another volume treating a single, and for the time being non-newsworthy, country in Eastern Europe, which has aroused anything like the same interest. On the day of publication it was the subject of two discussions on the BBC Home Service (*The World Tonight* and *Woman's Hour*) and also on the BBC Overseas English-language Service *Outlook*. The same week, the book was the subject of a lively interview on TV Channel Four, by the eminent writer and broadcaster, Mr Robert Kee. I upheld my reassessment of the Yugoslav civil war (ch. 3) by bringing on a former airgunner of the RAF, Mr Jack Aldridge, who had been rescued, badly wounded, by the Chetniks in Bosnia in 1944 and then, after four months of being nursed and protected, had had the harrowing experience of seeing his rescuers shot down in cold blood by the better-armed Partisans. Yorkshire TV were kind enough to provide me with a video-tape of this programme which I have sent to the British Embassy in Belgrade, suggesting that it be shown to the Editor of *Duga* and anyone else who denounces me in the Yugoslav press.

There were also favourable reviews in the *Observer*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail*. *Duga* is certainly correct in saying that the book has not provoked much public comment in Yugoslavia, but its readers should surely have been informed that it has been prohibited by a special decree of the Ministry of the Interior, which was published in the *Official Gazette* last October. The "necessary smuggling" always takes longer, though my Slovene friends tell me that a half-dozen copies are now circulating in Ljubljana.

It is true that my book was polemical in tone as I had to shake the entrenched Titoist bias which, for so long, had dominated British and American opinion. The response of the Yugoslav authorities—which was not to argue their case, but to expel me and to ban my book—provides additional evidence that, for all its so-called non-alignment, Yugoslavia is part of the Communist world. As in all other countries committed to the Marxist-Leninist creed, mendacity is an accepted weapon in the struggle against our Western concepts of freedom and democracy.

NORA BELOFF

London

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Déricourt

I DON'T THINK I have ever enjoyed an article quite as much as I enjoyed James Rusbridger's "Bluff, Deceit & Treachery" in your May issue. Hearty congratulations to Mr Rusbridger for such a clear, presentable account of material most difficult to construe. Every line riveted me. The reason is that the late spy-writer E. H. "Ted" Cookridge (not his real name, though it was on his passport) was a friend; and I edited two of his "SOE" books: *They Came from the Sky* (Heinemann, 1965), and *Inside SOE* (Barker, 1966).

He told me the Russians wanted to hang him; and I can well believe it. How they must have wallowed in his *Soviet Spy Net*, another very good book. He said he had been warned never to enter the London Russian Embassy (just off Holland Park); that they had "a room downstairs" and if they ever got him in there. . . .

Everytime I called at his London flat he would open the door one inch, and then: "Oh, it's you, Steve, come in. . . ."

Inside SOE was meticulously researched. Arthur Barker Ltd told me that never in all their years of publishing had they had to spend so many man-hours checking and cross-checking a manuscript as had been spent on *Inside SOE*—in my opinion one of Cookridge's best of about 20 good books that he wrote. And now James Rusbridger's article quite transcends this work and, of course, others involving the French section of SOE.

That Frenchman Déricourt! May I only say that I—a Canadian newspaperman—can hardly believe that any Englishman, even someone superior to SOE headquarters on Baker Street, would order Déricourt furtively to divulge to the Germans data that facilitated the arrest of British agents in France. But it is clear that Déricourt did that.

The suffering of those exceptionally brave men and women—it is a tragedy beyond words.

STEPHEN SCHOFIELD

Godalming
Surrey

Stove & Popper

I ASKED: what can be the point of trying to refute scientific theories *empirically*, if the falsity of all such theories is (as Popper implies) certain *a priori*? Mr Tony Hollick [ENCOUNTER, Letters, July-August] replies by reminding me that in certain conditions, according to Popper, one false theory "corresponds better to the facts" than another false one. Well, Popper does hold that; and it is true, too. But the connection, if there is any, between my question and Mr Hollick's reply, eludes me.

One theory can be nearer the truth than another even if both are false; agreed. Obviously, then, there could sometimes be point in trying to find out which (if either) of two theories is nearer the truth, even in a case where both theories are *known* to be false. But it is equally obvious that in such a case there could never be any point in trying to "*falsify*" either theory. For even if we succeed, we would only be "slaying the slain."

D. C. STOVE

University of Sydney

Taking a Liberty

EVENTS like the reopening of the Statue of Liberty bring out the worst in British commentators. In snide and patronising tones, the Americans are pilloried for an excess of patriotic fervour—for wanting to "feel good about themselves."

The derisive words **"schmaltz"** *and* **"glitz"** *have pervaded the air-waves and newspaper columns for the last few days. We have been invited to snigger because the Liberty extravaganza was pulled together by a Hollywood producer and nearly all the biggest names in show business took part.*

THE BBC HAS BEEN **the worst offender. In the "Today" programme on Radio 4 yesterday they played a recording of a speech at the ceremony. In it, one of the showbiz luminaries said that what America meant to her above all was "taste." The reporter could not resist butting in with heavy irony. That was not, he told us, a word he would use about the proceedings. Then we heard the speaker explain that she was talking about the taste of hamburgers and hot dogs.**

A news report on BBC television last week was more explicitly hostile. Film of the preparations for the Liberty ceremony was cut into footage from the border between the United States and Mexico, showing US guards rounding up illegal immigrants and sending them home.

The reporter Martin Bell—whose overt disapproval of America has not softened in all the years he has been there—made the point that the ideal embodied in the Statue of Liberty, of America as a refuge for the dispossessed, was not being fulfilled in the case of Mexico.

IT WAS A CHEAP *and unfair comparison. To build a secure frontier the length of the Mexican border would be difficult and expensive but certainly within the United States' capability. It is not done precisely because it would conflict with the nation's image of itself as an open and tolerant society.*

IT SEEMS THAT **we can say things about the Americans that would be unacceptable in respect of other nations. In last week's "Any Questions?" on Radio 4 there was a discussion of experiments in transplanting the heads of monkeys. One panellist said certain American leaders appeared to have undergone that process already. Imagine the outcry if he had made that remark about, say, the Irish.**

It is not necessary to approve of every aspect of American society, or the actions of its leaders, to recognise the significance of the great immigration of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the stupendous achievement in nation-building that flowed from it. "Schmaltz" as a form of celebration is appropriate, since the Yiddish word (meaning sugary sentimentality) arrived in America with the East European Jews who have had such a profound influence on the nation's culture.

I OBJECT TO *letting national stereotypes get in the way of recognising a country's real achievement and reporting it sympathetically. In a couple of weeks, after all, we shall be going through our own feeling-good-about-ourselves exercise when the marriage of a rather unremarkable young couple is elevated to a fairy-tale occasion for rejoicing.*

I DO NOT KNOW **how the American media will report it but to judge from past performance there will be less crude xenophobia and fewer supercilious jibes than have been aired by their British counterparts over the last few days.**

Michael Leapman
in DAILY TELEGRAPH (*London*)

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"Anno Dominicism"

JOHN SILVERLIGHT's piece in your March issue makes enthralling reading. At the end he says that Thackeray wrote to Dr John Brown in November 1887. If William Makepeace Thackeray is meant, this was very clever of him, since he died in 1863. It would be interesting to know what "medium" he employed while he was "by way of decomposing."

Mr Silverlight also implies that Thackeray was 47 years old in 1887. No, W.M. was 47 in 1858, since he was born (in India at that) in 1811—hence the "Makepeace."

As this "comedy of errors" can't be the compositors' fault this time, who then is to blame for this literary "clanger"?

I can only hope Mr Silverlight really means Dr John Brown—a common enough name, even then.

ALLEN ROLAND

Fuengirola
Spain

THE DATE should have been 1858. Apologies.

JOHN SILVERLIGHT

London

The Great Cabbage Hoax

YOU ARE ALL very critical and sceptical chaps, no doubt, and I am sure you know that there is many a story that makes wonderful reading, told by someone who swears (and believes) that it is true, but which turns out to be a legend that has been going the rounds for years.

Just such a story is the item which you reprinted from the *Daily Mail* in your "Life & Letters Today" column [ENCOUNTER, April 1986].

> **Lord's Prayer: 56 words.**
> **23rd Psalm: 118 words.**
> **Gettysburg Address: 226 words.**
> **Ten Commandments: 297 words.**
> **United States Department of Agriculture Order on the price of cabbage: 15,629 words.**

When this story first surfaced in the 1950s, Max Hall did an article about it called "The Great Cabbage Hoax" (in *The Reporter,* 16 March 1954). The tale made a big comeback in the 1960s, especially during the Kennedy-Johnson years in Washington; and Hall collected dozens of new clippings. On questioning, none of the authors knew precisely the source for the comparison. It was supposed to refer to a cabbage order of the Office of Price Stabilisation which had been issued during the Korean War. But, as Hall wrote in a second paper ("The Great Cabbage Hoax: A Case Study", in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1965, vol. 2, no. 4),

> "The remarkable thing about this episode was that OPS had no cabbage order. During its entire existence, from its birth in January 1951 to its death in April 1953, OPS never placed controls on the price of cabbage."

To be sure, verbose civil servants are fair game for the mythologists, and this kind of chestnut—as all folklore specialists and collectors of "true legends" will surely know—has periodic revivals. I myself have in recent years—my face is deep red as I confess this—fallen for some of these tales . . . heard from "a friend of a friend" or "I read it in the paper." One, I am afraid, was recorded by Baring-Gould in *Myths of the Middle Ages*, and traced back to the Sanskrit of 540 A.D.

We all get taken in at times, and on this matter of the *Daily Mail*'s scoop about a governmental order about cabbage, well, you've simply been had.

JOHN DUFFIE

Victoria, B.C.
Canada

Magee's Words

BRYAN MAGEE'S "Words Fail Us" (ENCOUNTER, May) makes some very interesting and important points; and his argument is, I think, broadly correct. The word "socialist", however, appears in the November 1827 issue of the *Cooperative Magazine*, six years before Magee finds it, but this is a pedantic quibble that doesn't affect his argument.

I also welcomed his magnanimous acknowledgment that *some* Marxists, at least (in this instance Dr Herbert Marcuse), abhor the tendency to treat Marxist concepts as fixed and eternal rather than trying to develop them since they are pre-eminently *historical*.

But this is a point on which Magee himself fails to go far enough. Having located the historical emergence of our social and political vocabulary, he contents himself with the banal observation that it is thereby "outmoded." But the same might then be said about the concepts of liberalism, democracy, rationalism, etc. which I hope Magee does not wish to throw into "the dustbin of history" (that dreadful phrase Trotsky was so fond of using).

More importantly, it seems that when it comes to *describing the nature* of the social changes associated with the "Industrial Revolution", Magee actually *uses uncritically* the very categories and concepts which he says are "exhausted." As a sociologist myself, I could add to his list not only "Sociology" (1830) but also "industrial revolution" (1827)!

One cannot fail to be struck by the way in which those writers of the present wish to assert that we are today going through a transition towards a wholly new and unprecedented kind of society. They are proponents of the "Post-Industrial" society in one or another version of the futurist scenario, with all the associated clichés of "smokestack" versus "sunbelt" etc. They argue that we must jettison our "outmoded" social categories and concepts—but they actually base their arguments upon close analogies with the very conventional, yet historically-specific, ways of interpreting and explaining the so-called "industrial revolution." There is nothing so "conservative" as the "Futurisms" which have never ceased being produced since the 18th century. Nothing is so quickly "dated" as yesterday's prophetic vision of the future.

MICHAEL PETERS

Leeds

Definitions

MAY I ADD two unimportant notes to D. J. Enright's delightful commentary on linguistic bafflegab ("Acoustical Excitation", ENCOUNTER, June)?

The verb *abstauben, to dust off*, has its slang meaning of *irregularly acquiring* in everyday German usage, and is recorded in the dictionaries in this sense (in the one-volume Duden *Deutsches Universalwörterbuch,* 1983, for example). No Foreign Legion is needed to shift meanings in the German language.

As for the *bunny dip* of Hugh Hefner's staff, I'd understood that the phrase meant rather the opposite of the decorum Enright describes. Surely the *bunny dip* is that forward bow, trained into Bunny girls, which enables the male client to get the maximum possible view down a girl's front? At any rate I used the phrase in this sense, jokily, in my poem "Soon to be a Major Film", written in mid-1983 and published in 1985 in my collection *Propaganda*: I had found the phrase in *Playboy*, which presumably ought to know what it means.

MICHAEL HULSE

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY

Thamesmouth Printing Group,

17-21 Hovefields Avenue, Basildon, Essex

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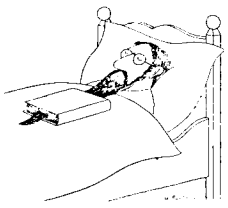
Life & Letters Today

Manila



BEDSIDE READING: *An eerie silence reigned in the presidential bedroom of the Malacanang Palace where only a few hours earlier Ferdinand Marcos had finally given up hope of clinging to the power he held so firmly for over 20 years in the Philippines.*

At his bedside lay a cream-coloured envelope containing a Valentine from his wife, Imelda. Next to the bed was a hospital trolley bed, and on a small bedside table a book: "A Handbook for Renal Transplant Outpatients", from the University of Texas medical school. Marcos has always denied that he received two kidney transplants.

Madame Marcos' final bedside reading as wife to a president had been the book by Henry Schuler, "Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do."

THE OBSERVER

Piccadilly Circus

ERRATIC EROS: **"Eros" is back to front. Alfred Gilbert designed the statue as part of a memorial to the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury. Inscriptions around the base testify to the Earl's qualities and achievements. He did not intend it to be a representation of Eros. This was the name given to it by Londoners on seeing that it was carrying a bow.**

However, the reason for the bow was to incorporate a pun on the word Shaftesbury. The bow has just been fired and points downwards so that the *shaft* would *bury* itself somewhere along Shaftesbury Avenue.

For this reason, the statue was originally erected facing towards Shaftesbury Avenue. However, following renovation, it has been replaced facing towards Lower Regent Street, thus losing the point in more ways than one.

Can we have it the right way round please?

LONDON STANDARD

Brussels

RED & BLACK: *The Common Market is to rename a red cabbage after a complaint by Labour MEP Mr Robert Cryer that its present title is offensive.*

The Dutch cabbage "Niggerhead" is listed in a catalogue of vegetables governed by the EEC. From January, it will be known as "Red Drumhead" or "Red Danish", an official in Brussels said yesterday.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

LEADERSHIP: **Bernard Levin's compassionate article [Dr John Aiken writes] on professional indexers reminded me of a little book I came across on the propagation of the Gospel in the Third World. This had been painstakingly indexed; and under the heading "*Lead*" were two entries: "*kindly light*" and "*poisoning*."**

THE TIMES

London

ARCHAIC RECTITUDE: *Well, the major mistake last week was to ask you to find five grammatical errors in my column [Henry Porter writes]. I thought that if I limited it to five I would not be exposed as a complete illiterate. But this did not work because, with the exception of three tactful souls, you all submitted different errors to the ones I had planted. The embarrassing total ran to 23, although I felt in many instances that you insisted on an archaic rectitude which neither sounded nor read very well. Anyway, it was certainly a chastening experience and I will try to do better. To the winners—bottles of champagne is on their way!*

SUNDAY TIMES

Rome

LINGUA FRANCA?: **Vatican II changed many things in the Church. Most notable among these is the decline in the use of Latin.**

Not too long ago, Latin was the lingua franca at all Vatican events. Prelates constructed elegantly complicated arguments in elaborately turned Latin phrases. Now Latin is an "option", though the official language of official documents is Latin. The babel of the world's languages is now the rule at Synods, with English and Spanish especially popular.

But a few hardy souls hold out for the languge of Constantine. When the Bishops broke down into language groups to discuss a final Synod document, six prelates chose to carry out their discussions in Latin.

NEW YORK TIMES

Washington, D.C.

PROUDLY WE HAILED: *The Francis Scott Key Bridge in Washington, D.C., named after the man who wrote the words to the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner", is undergoing repairs and refurbishing, which will tie up traffic for eight months.*

A better name for the bridge might be "the Car-Strangled Spanner."

WASHINGTON POST

Tokyo

SLOPPY RIVALS: **For all of their world-famous brand names, the Scotch producers complain that they cannot match Japanese competition because of what they say is a tax system that artificially encourages sales of lower-quality liquor.**

"They've brainwashed the whole nation into drinking this slop", sputtered a representative of one Scotch brand about his Japanese competitors.

On the grocery shelves of Japan, Scotch whisky is lined up against such Japanese rivals as *No Side, Cobra, Rawhide*, and *Moo*.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

THE BIG THREE: *When asked how many people worked in the Vatican Pope John Paul is supposed to have replied: "About one in three."*

All the more remarkable then that there are only 1,800 on the Roman Curia's payroll, which works out at one bureaucrat for every 450,000 Catholics.

That makes it, according to the management pundit Peter F. Drucker, the third most efficient organisation in history—the other two were General Motors and the Prussian Army.

DAILY MAIL

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ASSESSING THE NUCLEAR AGE

Edited by **Len Ackland** and **Steven McGuire**

An excellent overview of the nuclear concerns that have emerged over the last forty years. "Superb...It is written in English not jargon. The personalities of the authors come through as well as their scientific eminence. I found it gripping." –Anthony Lewis

Distributed for the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*

NUCLEAR DETERRENCE

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Essential for all concerned with the ethics of nuclear weapons policies, this book brings together the views of both philosophers and strategists. Contributors include: Richard Wasserstrom, Colin Gray, Richard Ullman, Sissela Bok, Robert Tucker, Robert Art, and Jan Narveson.

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Stephen M. Meyer

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APOCALYPSE

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Louis René Beres

Foreword by **Paul C. Warnke**

"Beres avoids the hysteria and polemics that often mar similar books by concentrating on a sober and well-documented account of the areas of risk....His proposals for dealing with the problems are worthy." –Lawrence Freedman, *New Society*

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Karl Jaspers

A classic work in which the eminent philospher sees hope in the possibility that fear of nuclear warfare will produce a new ethos, and create a politics adequate to the threat of extinction." A document that the Western world can be proud of." –*Christian Science Monitor*

SWORDS FROM PLOWSHARES

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Albert Wohlstetter et al.

Foreword by **Fred C. Iklé**

"A landmark study that will forever alter the debate about proliferation and nuclear energy."–Amory Lovins, Friends of the Earth

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